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destroyed ; but whether the latter event be a subject of regret is a different question. The good examples of history are valuable, but the bad ones work mischief. And what is the proportion that the former bear to the latter ? That of the good to the bad men in Sodom.

We have heard it intimated, that the national legislature proposes to follow the lead of New York, and have a census taken of the Indians under the guardian care of the government. We hope this will prove to be true, for many reasons, which our limits do not permit us to enumerate. And we also hope that Mr. Schoolcraft's valuable services will be secured in the work.

ART. III. — *The Life of Joseph Addison.* By LUCY AIKIN. Philadelphia : Carey & Hart. 1846. 12mo. pp. 279.

WE had not ventured to promise ourselves an opportunity of bringing this great man in review before us ; and we are not without misgivings lest the world, which, like poor Lear, is apt to be somewhat disordered in mind, should ask as he did, which is the justice and which the culprit. But we are grateful to Miss Aikin for writing this unpretending life of Addison, and still more so, for doing it in her quiet and sensible manner, contenting herself with a likeness, and not trying to make it fascinating with paint and gilding, after the fashion of the present day. Indeed, there is hardly a subject in the whole range of literature, where affectation and display would be more out of place. Those attractive arts, which snatch at impossible graces, sacrificing truth to effect, and simple nature to quick impression, would be reproved to silence, if not to shame, by the presence of this great master. The very thought of such treatment is enough to make one wish he were on earth again, exerting the authority which a powerful, refined, and graceful genius like his would have, wherever it existed. It would be a sport to see how many popular authors, who are read and admired by thousands now, would, like the swine in Scripture, which they resemble in coarseness and the spirit that

has entered into them, soon be seen running violently down a steep place to perish in the sea of oblivion,— those blessed waters which, it is to be hoped, will never dry away.

There is something in the literary fame of this writer which it is always refreshing to remember; like the Parthenon, it retains its charm, though for ages unvisited by the traveller, laid waste by the barbarian, and weather-stained by time; so far transcending the adventurous antics of modern art, that, as long as a fragment of pillar or peristyle remains, it will be impossible to doubt the perfection of that which the world of taste adores. Writing always from a full mind, and never for the sake of writing, he is always rich to overflowing in his resources, and, however excellent the work may be, gives the impression that he is able to produce something better. His memory was full of information, all the particulars of which had found their places in his mind in harmony and order, so that classical allusions and suggestions from what he had seen and read presented themselves when they were wanted, giving him power to select the best. Like most other calm and quiet observers of life, he found in his own experience incidents and intimations which, playfully introduced, gave spirit and life to his writings. His movements were so easy and graceful, that no one thought of the hard study and self-discipline by which alone he could have gained so complete a mastery of his own powers. Every thing seemed to be thrown off without an effort, and so indeed it was; the effort came earlier in the history of his mind; and certain it is, that, without long and patient thought, such as requires great concentration of the intellectual powers, he never could have acquired a logical exactness so entirely free from all the appearance of art, nor a habit of active and earnest thought so much resembling reverie in the familiarity and carelessness of its flow.

One of the most striking traits of Addison's mind was his humor, a quality of writing which is enjoyed more generally than it is understood. It is commonly supposed to be a gift, something belonging to the native constitution of the mind; but if so, the birthright would be found of little advantage without that ready tact and intuitive discernment of the right time and place, which give humor its principal charm. The untimely jest is like the stamp of an awkward man upon a gouty toe; it is apt to be received with a gratitude bordering

on profaneness, and it is a caution to all the prudent to keep out of the way of the offender's disastrous evolutions. Some, like Swift, who would otherwise be masters of the art, disarm themselves of part of their power by an appearance of ill-nature. Any thing which looks like savageness or an intent to wound always creates antipathy to him who indulges his satirical propensity at the expense of another's feelings. Even if the satire should be wholly impersonal, and aimed at the follies and infirmities of human nature, the caustic and biting reflection which implies bitterness in him who makes it never gives pleasure, nor finds a general welcome.

There is, also, in some humorous writers who have nothing of this misanthropy, a kind of sly coarseness, an apparent enjoyment of sensual allusions, a disposition to tread as near as they dare to such forbidden ground, which the refined and cultivated reader takes as an insult to himself, and does not readily forgive. This is a temptation, a strange and fatal one, from which we are sorry to say a writer of our own land, whom we could otherwise name with the highest honor, is not entirely free. But in Addison's humor no one can trace any of these faults of taste, spirit, or feeling ; it plays like sunbeams through the broken clouds upon the landscape, lighting it up with gladness. Nature herself is not more exempt from severity and grossness ; and we see, that, largely gifted as he was with the natural power, he rather restrains than indulges it ; he never looks abroad for the jest, and receives with selection those which present themselves as he is writing. He always distinguishes most accurately the appropriate place and time for producing it ; thus showing that it requires high cultivation of mind, a quick perception of fitness, and a perfect command of the powers, to employ this faculty to advantage. Otherwise it is of no value, and may be even an injury to the possessor ; as the gift of Tell's arrows would be of little avail without the sure hand and eye to use them.

Nothing could be more superfluous than to praise the style of Addison, which has been admired by successive generations as the most perfect of all examples. Art, in its highest cultivation, comes back to nature ; and thus, while naturalness is the prevailing charm of his manner, it shows the result, but not the action, of high finish and industrious care. The word *gentlemanly* would describe it better than

any other, because it implies the union of elegance and refinement with energy and power. In order to be thus natural, style must be the true expression of the habitual movements of the mind ; it is not to be made up or put on at pleasure ; if it is second-hand, it will betray its unlawful origin, like stolen garments which do not fit the wearer. The only way really to improve a deficient style is, not to change the arrangement and selection of language ; the care in such cases must be applied directly to the mind itself ; and its utterance will become free and graceful, in proportion to the order which it establishes among its treasures and resources, and the easy mastery over its own powers which practice enables it to obtain.

We say this, because style is often spoken of as if it was an art, like drawing or painting, which may be acquired by one mind as well as another, by the obscure and feeble as well as the clear and strong. So, in point of fact, the matter is treated by many writers ; those, for example, who have endeavoured to Germanize their manner, practising on it the same arts which jockeys apply to horses' tails, to make them ambitious and exalted. But all the while, the style is not their own ; they are responsible, doubtless, as a man is held to answer for what he borrows or steals ; but it gives no indication of their natural tone of thought, any more than a bell, when it tolls for funeral or worship, expresses its own sorrow or devotion. Should their minds perchance speak out, they would throw all the fine arrangement into confusion, and startle their owners, perhaps, by the plain English which they would employ. We may depend upon it, that Carlyle does not talk Carlylism, nor do the imitators of that eminent person walk in darkness through a conversation as coolly as through a printed page. When their object is to express their thought, none can do it better ; and till they do the same thing in writing as freely as in ordinary communication with their friends, they may be cheered on with the desperate admiration of a misguided few, but they will find themselves out in their dead reckoning. If they are bound for immortality, or even for general favor, they had better take observations of the great lights of the literary world. From these they will find, that no style can be extensively popular and pleasing which is not a true and direct expression of the writer's way of thinking. It is not

enslaved to any particular form ; it is bound by no narrow and rigid law. The elephantine march of Johnson may be as welcome as the manly gait of Addison, because it represents as truly the movements of his ponderous and gigantic mind.

But the character of this distinguished man is a more important consideration than his talents or his style ; indeed, it was this which, shining through his writings, did as much as his ability to give him influence in his own time, and an illustrious memory in ours. John Foster, who, with all his excellence, occasionally betrayed something of that crustiness which among some sects passes for a Christian grace, spoke in a wholesale and sweeping way of all the chief names in English literature, as opposed to the spirit of the gospel, and aiding and comforting the enemy by their influence and example. To some extent, this was true. There was quite too little sense of responsibility associated with intellectual power ; either the intense effort to keep body and soul together made them careless in what manner they fed the popular taste, or the jealousies incident to their profession destroyed their conscience and kindness ; or in some instances, perhaps, their heads were turned by success. Whatever the cause may have been, a greater proportion than one could have supposed were unfaithful to the high trust which is confided to all who are gifted with high powers. Still, it is extraordinary that with such an example as Addison before him, one which can be contemplated with almost unmixed satisfaction, any moralist should give so hasty a verdict, which savours more of passion than truth even in its application to others, and cannot be sustained for a moment with respect to him. If religion be the great science of duty, it would be hard to show where it ever found a more effective teacher ; and we trust we shall be able to make it appear that, if his tone and profession were high, his life and conversation stood ready to make them good.

But here we are met by some prevailing impressions concerning Addison, which allow that in most respects he was eminently worthy, but nevertheless charge him with certain faults and frailties which throw a shadow over his name ; and, as the subject is an interesting chapter in literary history, we propose to consider it somewhat at large. All who knew him bore witness to his excellence ; his goodness of

heart and strength of principle appear in every part of his life. His freedom from ambition is clearly shown by his writing for the most part without giving his name to the world, and his generous kindness could hardly be proved more conclusively than by his submitting to this labor to serve another. And yet, strange as it may seem, it is in these very points that some have assailed him, accusing him of jealous hostility to rising men of genius, and of selfish unkindness to his friends. Such traits of character are not very consistent with that religious virtue which he is so generally admitted to have possessed, that, as Boswell assures us, Johnson, who, from political prejudice, was no friend to his memory, was in the habit of recommending his writings to those who felt the need of high influence and inspiration, and often spoke of him with great respect, as foremost among the wise and good.

All these impressions to the disadvantage of Addison can be traced home to the authority of Pope, who, though in some respects a good man, was notoriously jealous of his own literary standing, and, as he had no mercy for those who were beneath, was not likely to look with much benignity on one who stood above him. His infirmity was not without its excuses ; his personal deformity was of a kind which sours the temper ; his nervous temperament was irritable to the last degree ; and while his poetical talent made him a subject of interest and admiration, his bodily weakness prevented his appearing familiarly in the public eye. In his partial retirement, he was surrounded by parasites of that kind who manifest their faithfulness, not by friendly services, but by flattering unworthy prejudices and passions, and, in case of any alienation, are like the firemen of Constantinople, who, it is said, for reasons of their own, sometimes throw oil on the flames of a conflagration, which has less effect to extinguish them than the element that is commonly employed.

Spence's *Anecdotes*, which Johnson used so freely in writing his *Lives of the Poets*, contains a rich abundance of this kind of lore. Pope appears to have made his humble friend the residuary legatee of all his suspicions and aversions ; and as Johnson lived at a time when party spirit was at the highest, and did not conceal his belief that to be a “vile Whig” was an inexpiable sin, he gave more faith to the stories and intimations of the *Anecdotes* than he would have done, if

Addison had had the presumptive evidence of Toryism in his favor ; and, as his life of the Whig statesman and poet has of course displaced all others, the character which he has given him determines the opinion of the present age. But there was nothing underhand in the prejudice of Johnson ; it was always manly, aboveboard, and made no pretension to thorough impartiality. Such was his stern veracity, that nothing would induce him to distort or suppress the truth, or rather what he considered the truth, though he was often misled by his feelings in his attempts to ascertain it. On several occasions, as we shall see, he detects Spence's misrepresentations, and ascribes them to the *malignity* of Pope. The wonder is, that when he saw through some of these mistakes or perversions of fact, whichever they may have been, he should have felt as if such a guide could ever be safely trusted ; for trust him he did, too much and too far ; almost every thing which he has recorded to the disadvantage of Addison rests on Spence's authority alone. We do not suppose that Pope told his humble chronicler what he did not himself believe ; the term *malignity*, which Johnson employs, must be received with some discount for his habitual choice of overgrown words. The amount of this malice was, that, being jealous of Addison as a rival, he was ready to credit and repeat whatever was said to his disadvantage ; and those persons who think it a pity to spoil a pretty quarrel were always at hand to minister to the prejudice which Pope, unfortunately for his happiness and honor, was too well disposed to feel.

Very little is known of Addison's early life, nor can it now be ascertained how far the influences which acted upon him in childhood determined his character in later years ; sometimes those influences form young minds by sympathy, sometimes by reaction and resistance. His father was a divine, respectable in his way, but earnest and busy in those times which made all men politicians. Active, however, as he was in his devotion to church and king, he lived in comparative want, and was rewarded only by coming in sight of a bishopric before he died. One story of Addison's younger days represents him as escaping from school, to avoid some punishment which weighed on his imagination, and living on such food as the woods supplied, till his retreat was discovered. Dr. Johnson records a tradition of his once being

ringleader in a “barring out.” The two legends seem inconsistent with each other, and yet they may both be true. The former does not show, as Miss Aikin believes, the elements of that bashful spirit which afflicted him so much in his manhood. The fact is, that all boys grow retiring in their manner, when they are threatened with a whipping ; and though it is not always the case, as Goldsmith says, that your modest people are the most impudent in the world, it is true, that many are bold and free with their associates, who are subdued in the presence of others.

Addison was never able, through a life spent in the daylight of the world, to throw off that embarrassment which paralyzed the action of his mind in company, and made him appear distant, cold, and still. Chesterfield, in whose presence he was not likely to thaw, described him as an awkward man, while those whose company he enjoyed received a very different impression of his manners and social powers. Swift, who was not apt to err by excess of praise, said that he never saw a man half so agreeable. Lady Mary Montague, who had a tolerable acquaintance with society, described him as the best company in the world. Pope, who, in his very eulogy, shows something of pique, allows that his company was more charming than that of any other man, though with strangers he preserved his dignity by a stiff silence ; thus ascribing to *hauteur* that coldness which was evidently owing to natural diffidence and reserve. Dr. Young says, that he was rather mute on some occasions ; but when he felt at ease, he went on in a noble strain of thought and language, which enchain'd the attention of all.

There are many such testimonials to the richness and variety of his conversation ; and if any received a different impression, it is plainly owing to the constitutional, or rather English, reserve, which hung like a mill-stone about him all his days. It is thought to be less common in our country ; here, old and young, the latter especially, have in general quite as much confidence as the case requires. Still, there are examples of those who labor and suffer under this disease, which renders them in company “afraid to sit, afraid to fly,” unable to say the right thing, and, if they say any thing, sure to say the wrong ; but generally so oppressed with the necessity of speaking, that, through fear of being silent, they dare not open their lips, and causing epicures in conversation to say,

that, however much they might like the oyster, if accessible, they cannot submit to the trouble of opening the shell.

It was while at school that Addison formed that friendship with Steele which gave so decided a direction to his future life. Steele, who, though his parents were English, contrived to be born in Dublin, as the appropriate birthplace for one of such an Irish nature, was, as the world knows full well, a thoughtless, inconsistent, rantipole person, full of talent and good feeling, which were made of small effect by his total want of discretion in common affairs. If it was possible for him to get into difficulty, he was sure to improve the chance ; but at the same time, so amiable was his disposition, that he always found friends, who, though out of patience with his folly, were ready to get him out of the scrape. Early in life, being sensible of his own frailty, he endeavoured to put himself under the necessity of living religiously, by writing a book called *The Christian Hero* ; but as there was no basis of principle, nor even taste, under his conversion, the inconsistency which soon appeared between his life and his profession made it worse for him in every respect than if his banner had not been lifted quite so high. Then, to enliven himself under the depression brought on by ridicule and reproach, he wrote a comedy called *The Funeral*, with which the public were entertained, as might be expected from so sprightly a subject, and which, of course, was in the same degree refreshing to the writer.

A literary life commencing thus would hardly be expected to lead to propitious results ; and he would have done nothing to establish his reputation as a writer, had it not been for his illustrious friend. It was not unnatural that the shy and delicate Addison should take a fancy to the bold and open-hearted Steele ; and the latter had sufficient discernment to understand the merits and abilities of his companion. The attachment thus formed continued nearly through life ; and only the exasperation of political feeling, which spares nothing that is sacred, could have alienated them from each other ; for it is unfortunately true, that the bands were broken at last.

Few particulars of Addison's life during the years spent at Oxford have been recorded ; but there is enough to show, even if his writings afforded less ample testimony, that he made good use of his time. One circumstance is remem-

bered, which implies that he had not fallen into the way of drinking that is so common in the great English Universities, and is not suppressed by right moral feeling as it should be in ours ; most of his studies were after dinner, a time when the levee of the Muses is not apt to be best attended. Such associations of young men are in the habit among themselves of manufacturing a public sentiment for their own use ; it is often very unlike any other which can be found in the earth below. It maintains, that lounging, reading novels and similar picture-books, together with a certain coarse defiance of authority, are proofs of genius, and that good-fellowship, like religious character among the ancient Jews, is determined not by what cometh out of the mouth, but rather by that which goeth in. The tendency to these corruptions was strong in his day ; for drinking to excess was too common in the high and low places of society to excite the disgust which it deserves ; and that he should be able to pursue his studies, at a time when those about him were taking stronger potations than the Castalian fountain supplies, is an evidence that the taste for excess, which has been charged upon him, as we apprehend without reason, certainly did not exist at a period of life when the foundations of that habit are most likely to be laid.

It is quite clear that he must have disciplined his mind at this time, in preparation for that easy and graceful criticism in which he excelled, and in which no one without deep thought, as well as study, can ever attain success. He was also versed in some branches of natural history, as his pleasing remarks on instinct, and some of his letters, imply ; and that he acquired this knowledge at this period of life may be inferred from the well known “ Addison's Walk,” which is still pointed out to visitors at Oxford, as his favorite resort. By his Latin verse he acquired reputation, and with it some substantial advantage. His first attempt in English verse was an address to Dryden, then going down into the cold evening of his day, uncheered even by that patronage which considers itself more blessed to receive the homage of genius than to furnish it with the means of subsistence. Miss Aikin calls it the age of Mæcenases, we hardly know why ; they certainly showed that kind of patronage which bestows little and exacts much, which requires the sacrifice of manliness and independence in those on whom it smiles, and parts

with its guineas only on receiving a heavier golden weight of glory. This kind of liberality may be found in any age ; any one will trade on those advantageous terms. But if genius, even in Addison's time, expected a more disinterested bounty, it was apt to be disappointed ; it was well if its demand for bread was answered with a single stone ; it might consider itself too happy if it was not pelted with them.

Addison appears to have been originally destined for the church, and his thoughtful and contemplative spirit might have found a home in the sacred profession, where it is not, as in England, dependent on patronage, and therefore married to worldliness by law. For some reason now unknown, perhaps by unconsciously yielding to circumstances, he inclined to the paths of literature ; and while yet at Oxford, he is found in communication with Tonson, the bookseller, whose name is as familiar in the annals of the time as that of Monsieur Tonson at a later day. His essay on the *Georgics*, which he affixed to the translation of Dryden, who appears to have been pleased and flattered by his attentions, was not considered as promising much strength and originality, though its style was unexceptionable, and its criticism just. Of a translation of the fourth *Georgic*, which he attempted, the elder poet courteously observed, that, after it, his own swarm would not be worth the hiving. He engaged also in a translation of Herodotus, to be superintended and partly executed by himself ; which implies that he had more acquaintance with Greek than Johnson was disposed to allow. This work never reached the press, but his translations from Ovid were published, with notes which eclipse the poetry, and, as the great critic admitted, gave full promise of that discriminating taste and talent which were afterwards so brightly manifested, and admired as widely as they were known. He also produced a work which, at a later period, he seemed very willing to suppress. It was an account of English poets from Chaucer to Dryden, in which he treats the patriarch and his successor, Spenser, without the reverence which they so well deserve, and which is clamorously asserted for them by some, who, admiring without having read, are vengeful against those who have read without admiring.

The truth was, that the French classical taste was then coming into England, teaching its poets to care rather more

for polished elegance of language and measure than for the more substantial elements of truth and nature. The new fashion prevailed, and, as usual, the fashion which it displaced was treated with unmerited scorn. In this way it is that the public taste is always swinging, like a pendulum, far on one side or the other. This fancy came to its height of finish and excellence in Pope ; another age has seen him, with all his beauty and power, treated with profane derision, while a passion for infantine simplicity rises and reigns for a time ; this, too, after keeping the stage for its permitted season, is destined to give place to some other excess. But sufficient to the day is its own evil ; what this excess is to be we are not yet unfortunate enough to know.

Addison, with no small share of talent for poetry, was of course under the influence of the day, and, while his natural tendency was to nature, he was drawn aside by cultivation, and thus inclining one way while he walked in another, he could not be expected to reach the height of success. It is a little remarkable, that the effort which brought him at once into notice was made to order. Such productions generally have small attraction, except to those whose exploits they commemorate and flatter ; if they betray any other inspiration than that of necessity or ambition, their flame, like a fire of shavings, is soon spent, leaving no permanent brightness in the literary sky. His courtly career commenced with lines on the king's return from his European campaign in 1695, which gained him the favorable regard of Lord Somers, whose approbation was an honor. In 1697, he again sang the praise of William, who had no ear for such matters, in some lines on the Peace of Ryswick. These were addressed to Montagu, then a leading public character, eminent in literature as well as in the public councils. That statesman, in acknowledgment of the attention, procured him a grant of three hundred pounds a year, to give him the means of travelling, — a favor which would have been more to the purpose, had the money ever been paid ; but the king died soon after, and the little which he ever did for literature came at once to a close.

The young poet also gained reputation by Latin verses on the Peace. Johnson allows them to have been vigorous and elegant ; and when Addison went abroad, the volume, published with a preface of his own writing, served as an intro-

duction to learned and accomplished men. Among others, he presented it to Boileau, then in the height of his fame. The Frenchman replied, that the work had given him a new idea of English cultivation ; and truly there was room for new ideas, if we may judge from his remark to a traveller, who told him what honor the English had paid to the memory of Dryden. He said he was happy to learn it, but he had never heard the gentleman's name before. Alas for glorious John ! The truth was, the French at that time lorded it over the political and literary world like undisputed and rather supercilious masters. King William had done something to break their civil and military sceptre, and Marlborough was in a fair way to finish what he had begun. But it was long before any literary changes let sufficient light into France to see the names of Shakspeare and Milton, so completely eclipsed were they by certain French luminaries, — lost Pleiads, too, which have long since perished, and never been missed from the skies.

Whatever Addison's timidity and reserve may have been in England, he appears to have left them behind him when he travelled ; for we find him making acquaintance with all those who were distinguished in literature. He remarks, in one of his letters, that he had not seen a blush since he landed in France ; probably it is with blushes as with other matters, that the supply is regulated by the demand. Being but imperfectly acquainted with the French language, he took up his residence for a time at Blois, where it was thought to be spoken in great purity, in order to learn it ; and we happen to know something of his habits of life while there, from a French Abbé, a careless but impartial observer.

This worthy speaks of him as lying in bed all the forenoon, according to the London fashion, which has its origin in the circumstance, that the sun, in that dark atmosphere, brings no light which makes it worth while to rise. He was not talkative, and was often so lost in thought, that the ecclesiastic would be in his room some time before Addison was aware of his presence ; which may be true, though it is hard to conceive how the Abbé should have endured so long constraint upon his own active tongue. He says, too, with an air of some surprise, and as if it brought the Englishman's morals into suspicion, that he had no *amour* while he resided there ; if there was any thing of the kind, he must have

known it, which is very likely to be true. But the reproach of this deficiency is one that can be forgiven by those who do not regard morals and refinement as inconsistent things. The Nine were the only ladies of his acquaintance, and they appear to have received his devoted attentions. While preparing himself by the acquisition of modern languages for his European tour, he was diligently studying the allusions of classical writers to Italy and its antiquities, those being the subject of interest on which he had set his heart. His letters, written at the time, are short, but they have some touches of his peculiar manner, particularly one in which he congratulates a friend who tells him that he has lost ten pounds by a copy of verses. Addison assures him that every time he meets with such a loss, the more like a true poet he will be. In the spelling of his letters there is something which would fill a Phonographer with delight ; the word “bin” always represents the preterite of the verb to be ; and there are sundry other graces of the kind, which show how little importance was then attached to what is now considered essential in a well-educated writer.

On his second visit to Paris, he was able to enjoy the society in which it abounded ; and if it seems strange, that, with his acknowledged reserve, he could ever make himself at home in it, we must remember that such persons are very much influenced by the prevailing social spirit. In England, such a man would need to be furnished with an ice-breaker, to make his way in their arctic circles ; but where there is no reserve to meet reserve, but all are at their ease, a bashful man forgets himself, ceases to think of his own words and motions, and therefore is unconstrained and free. He was very much struck with the cheerfulness of the French, and the excellent terms with themselves on which they all stood. Sometimes their self-exaltation was disagreeable to an Englishman, who of course had as good an opinion of his own country as they could possibly have of France ; but their familiar courtesy was always pleasing ; and among their men of letters he found these whom he considered it a privilege to know. Among others, he visited Malebranche, who was much admired by the English. The French nation at the time had taken a religious turn, and apprehended that there might be something unchristian in speculations which they did not understand. Malebranche was therefore

better acquainted with the great men of England than some others of his countrymen ; and though he said nothing of glorious John, who was out of his line, he had heard of Newton, and also of Hobbes, at whom he shook his head.

Addison waited afterwards on Boileau, who was old and a little deaf, but conversed incomparably well, though he was very severe in his strictures on the present times, and flew into a passion with all who did not share his reverence for the past. Johnson thinks, that, as Boileau had “ an injudicious and peevish contempt for modern Latin,” the flattering things which he said of Addison, whom he knew only through his edition of the *Musæ Anglicanæ*, were proofs of his civility, not of his approbation. It might rather have been regarded as a testimony to the classical excellence of Addison’s Latin, and also of his taste, that the unsparing criticisms which the learned Frenchman made on other modern attempts were not considered as applying to his. When Boileau was freely berating his own time and all its literary productions, Addison asked him if he would not except *Telemachus*, which was then in the height of its fame. He allowed that it gave a better idea of Homer’s way than any translation, and that some passages of it were superior to Virgil ; but he had no patience with the eternal preaching of Mentor, and, on the whole, admitted nothing in its favor which it was possible to deny. As Boileau, after the death of his friend Racine, lived in retirement, his reception of Addison was a distinguished favor. It implied a high opinion of the traveller, and we are told by Tickell, that his friend had gained a very high and extensive reputation in other nations, before he was known or talked of in his own.

But Italy is the country in which such a traveller must feel most at home. He reached it in the usual way, by the tour through Switzerland, where the scenery impressed him as it does all others. His indifference, amounting to contempt, for the Gothic architecture, which appears in some passages of his work, has given an impression to the disadvantage of his taste. But this preference was of the conventional kind ; it was one in which he was educated ; it was not to be overcome by general cultivation, like a mistaken choice in literary works, nor had it any thing to do with that love of nature, which often is found mature and faultless in those who do not know one picture, statue, or building from another.

While in France, he was agreeably struck with those places in which the French king, when improving his palace-grounds, had followed the leading suggestions of nature, instead of forcing nature into the traces of art. We apprehend that he must have found but few such cases, and he valued them the more, perhaps, on account of their rarity ; for the landscape-gardening of that day, which was imported from that country into England, seemed to have for its leading principle to suppress nature, and to extinguish what it could not reform.

But while he found pleasure in contemplating these wonders and glories of the visible world, his active and searching mind made him a philosophical observer of men ; he looks upon them with “most humorous sadness,” — sometimes smiling at follies and pretensions, often breathing a fine spirit of liberty, but always inspired with a love of his race. He was just the man to encounter the officer of the Prince of Monaco, whose dominions consisted of two towns ; that official told him, with much solemnity, that his master and the king of France were faithful allies and friends. His most Christian Majesty must have derived great solace from this assurance, when Marlborough was thundering on his borders. The little republic of San Marino, which has existed through so many changes in Europe, is described with admirable humor ; of that kind, however, which, without any violent transition, easily resumes the serious vein. It closes with a manly reflection on that natural love of liberty, which fills its rocks and snows with inhabitants, while the Campagna is deserted, showing the deep and universal feeling, that the chief blessing of moral existence is for men to feel that they are free.

In his description of Rome, where he spent considerable time, the same fine spirit appears. Though he does not seem to have been an enthusiast in the arts, he was deeply interested in every thing connected with ancient literature ; and the remains of the Eternal City, eternal in its glory and influence, though sinking under the effects of malaria and time, had all of them some relation to those studies in which he was most deeply interested. His political feeling, if, indeed, it does not deserve the higher name of humanity, is shown in the remark, that the grandeur of the old commonwealth manifested itself in works of convenience or necessity, such as temples, highways, aqueducts, walks, and bridges ;

while the magnificence of the city under the emperors displayed itself in works of luxury or ostentation, such as amphitheatres, circuses, triumphal arches, pillars, and mausoleums. Miss Aikin suggests that he was the first who ever used the expression "classic ground," which is now as familiar as the ground on which we tread. In his days, Rome was not visited, as it is now, by tourists from all parts of the world ; the Englishman, having no social intercourse with the living, had ample time for intimacy with the mighty dead. Addison remarks, that he had become an adept in ancient coins, while he had almost lost his acquaintance with English money. As to rust, he could tell the age of it at sight ; having been forced by his total want of other society to converse with pictures, statues, and medals, all of which had some story to tell of the interesting and memorable past.

Whatever criticism may at times have said of the work in which he imparted to the world the results of his observation on foreign countries, the public, who are sure to be impartial and at least sufficiently discerning, gave it a hearty welcome. At first, it was thought too learned for popular circulation ; but when its true character was understood, it was so much in demand, that, before it could be reprinted, it rose to five times its first price. Johnson praises it rather coldly, though he admits the manner in which its elegance gains upon the reader ; of some parts he remarks, that it is not a severe censure to say that they might have been written at home. He might have said that it is no censure at all, but rather a statement of the fact with respect to this work and most others of the kind. His own tour to the Hebrides was written at home, and in his case, as in Addison's, the value consists in fine trains of thought and striking remarks suggested by new scenes and objects, and not in artist-like descriptions ; though Addison often shows great power in scene-painting, and would have applied it with distinguished success, had not moral and intellectual observation been more in harmony with the taste and tendency of his mind.

It is a little singular that the Dialogues on Medals, which are so connected with the foreign tour, should have been kept by him, and not suffered to see the light till after his death. None of his writings assemble more of his peculiar traits. Though Johnson does not allow him to have possessed great learning, he admits that he studied the Latin poets with

diligence and skill ; qualifying his disparaging remark by saying, that the abundance of his own mind supplied him with whatever he wanted. Certainly, nothing can be better selected and applied than the classical knowledge which he brings to bear on the subject before him ; and if he was never deficient in the information required, there seems no reason for challenging his acquaintance with other parts of the field which he was not concerned to explore. Perhaps, too, his learning may be undervalued in consequence of the playful humor in which the Dialogues abound ; an article so seldom encountered among professed scholars and antiquaries, that the lively remark is thought inconsistent with severe research, and the gay, without inquiry into its merits, is at once set down as far inferior to the grave.

Swift, in a well-known allusion to Addison's circumstances at this time, speaks of him as caressed by lords and left distressed in foreign lands ; which is true enough, so far as regards his circumstances, though the lords do not appear to deserve the reproach which the Dean, with his usual caustic philanthropy, endeavours to cast upon them. They faithfully served Addison, or rather meant to serve him, while they had the power ; it was no fault of theirs that King William broke his neck, and the pension was left unpaid. Their ability to serve him depended on their continuance in office, and they would have been glad to retain the power, if possible. They had already designated him for the office of English secretary, to attend Prince Eugene, who had just commenced the war in Italy, for the purpose of transmitting home accounts of his plans and operations. These designs in his favor, of course, came to nothing, when they lost their places ; and he must certainly have been hard pressed for the means of subsistence. With his usual manly reserve on matters which were personal to himself, he says nothing of his own wants or his means ; neither does Tickell, who had the means of knowing, supply the deficiency ; but the papers of Tonson show, that he was looking round for that support which patronage was no longer able to supply. The bookseller, who was a sort of *Mæcenas* in his way, had been desired by the Duke of Somerset, usually called the Proud, — one of those animals whom chance sometimes appears to lift up to see how they will look in their elevation, — to find a travelling tutor for his son ; and it occurred to Tonson, in his

good-nature, that the place would be the one for Addison. For the service thus rendered the Duke was to pay a hundred guineas at the end of the year, which seemed to himself so munificent, that he expected the offer to be welcomed with rapture by the fortunate individual on whom the choice should fall. Addison had no objection to the place, but he had no mind to worship the golden calf that offered it. He accordingly wrote an acceptance of the proposal, saying at the same time, that the compensation was not such as would make it an object, if the place were not on other accounts such as he desired. This independence was something so new to the nobleman, that he considered it equal to a rejection of his offer ; at any rate, he saw that it would not be received with the profound sense of obligation which he expected ; and thus he lost the opportunity of going down to future times in connection with one who would have taught his son the manners and feelings of a gentleman, which the young sparks of aristocracy have not always the means of learning, and whose fame was bright enough to illuminate the insignificance of his own.

The literary history of England affords many such examples of lords in rank who are commoners in spirit and feeling. It is well that the changes of time had transferred the office of patron of men of letters to publishers like Jacob Tonson and his successors. If all of them had manifested the sense and spirit of Addison, the traditional base of prejudice on which the card-house of nobility rests must long since have given way to a better system, which would estimate claims to respect, not by the court register, nor the assessor's list, but by the elevation of manly and moral feeling and the riches of the heart.

When Addison returned to England, he was high in reputation ; but as he was in his thirty-third year, without the means of subsistence, the respect which was paid him, and the honor of being a member of the Kitcat, did not quite console him for the prospect of starving. But his political party was rising ; the victories of Marlborough were quite as beneficial to the Whigs as to the country ; and when the battle of Blenheim had thrown all others into the shade, Godolphin, turning his attention for once from Newmarket to Parnassus, was anxious to find some poet to sing the triumph in strains of equal glory. As the gentlemen of his

acquaintance dealt in other steeds than Pegasus, he applied to Montagu, better known by his title of Halifax, who told him, with more truth than courtesy, that if he knew such a person, he would not advise him to write while fools and blockheads were in favor, and those who had a good title to distinction were neglected. The lord treasurer did not resent the insinuation, though exceeding broad, and simply promised that whoever would do the service worthily should have no reason to repent his labors. He then sent to Addison, at the suggestion of Halifax, who wisely thought that the poet would do more for himself than his friends could do for him. The work was undertaken at once, and when it had proceeded as far as the famous simile of the angel, Godolphin, on seeing it, gave him the place of commissioner of appeals, which fell vacant by the resignation of John Locke.

There is something grotesque in this dealing in poetry as merchandise, and rewarding the bard with a post from which the great metaphysician had just departed. But what is more to the purpose, the poem was exactly what was wanted ; and it does credit to the public taste, that, with so small an infusion of thunder and lightning, without any approach to extravagance or excess, it should have found its way to the proud heart of England, and been deemed an adequate celebration of the greatest triumph of her arms. The truth was, the angel rode in the whirlwind and directed the storm to very good purpose ; at any rate, he contrived that they should fill the poet's sails, which were wisely and not ambitiously spread. Though it is not one of those works which readers of the present day care much for, still it is read, which is more than can be said of any other poem manufactured in the same way. They commonly die with the momentary enthusiasm which called them into existence, and the chief credit which the poet now gains is that of having kept clear of the faults and follies in which all similar writings abound. One good effect of it was to set the writer clear from debt. Slow rises talent, when poverty hangs upon it ; its flight is rather that of the flying-fish than the eagle ; and Marlborough did not more rejoice to see the enemy fly, than the poet to disperse his duns, and once more to stand even with the world.

We have dwelt thus at large on the manner in which Addison came forward into public life, to show that he did

not ascend, as Lord Bacon says men generally go up to office, by a “winding stair.” It was owing to the prevailing impression of his ability, not only in literary efforts, but for the duties of any station. Two years after the publication of the Campaign, he was appointed under-secretary of state by Sir Charles Hedges, and continued in that office by the Earl of Sunderland. The duties could not have been oppressive ; at least, he was able to accompany Lord Halifax to the Continent on a complimentary mission to the Elector, officiating as secretary to the minister, and receiving from that Mæcenas no other compensation or reward than the honor and expense of the tour. It is unfortunate that we have not more of his letters, which would give us entertaining glimpses of the public events of the day, such as the union of England and Scotland, which was so bitterly opposed by many of the latter nation. He says that one of the ministers of Edinburgh lamented in his prayer, that Providence, after having exalted England to be the head of Europe, was in a fair way to make it one of the tails ; this was probably a correct expression of the gratitude with which the measure of annexation was received.

One pleasant touch of the old Stuart feeling is brought to light, showing that Anne was not entirely passive, though she spent her days under the harrow of royalty without the least power to do as she pleased. Something having passed in the lower house of convocation, tending to reduce her authority as head of the church, she sent word to them that she forgave them for that time, but would make use of some other methods with them in case they did the like in future. He alludes to an odd premonition of the revolutionary spirit in France in an age when no one dreamed of any such thing ; it was a proposal conveyed in a memorial, through the Duke of Burgundy, to the government, advising them to get possession of the useless plate in convents and palaces, and to convert it into money ; and moreover, to take the needless officers and pensionaries, the number of whom was estimated at eighty thousand, and to employ them in the foreign service of the country. The latter part of this plan might answer for other nations, even for some in which the grand consummation of republicanism is already come. The only difficulties are, that the gentlemen in question, having the management of every thing, would choose to render this

patriotic service by proxy ; their part is to gather to the car-
cass when it is fallen, leaving others to pull it down.

Addison was not long to retain this office, which was well suited to his capacity and taste. The queen, who was occasionally persuaded to make changes, to show the world that she had a will of her own,—a fact which, notwithstanding her sex, was seriously doubted,—had begun to take the Tories into favor and council, and was preparing as fast as she dared to remove Marlborough from his brilliant station. Meantime, Addison was employed in an attempt to introduce an English opera to public favor in London. It seemed to him ridiculous, for audiences to sit by the hour listening to a language which neither singer nor hearer understood. His plan was to marry the Italian music to English verse, without reflecting, that, as nature had denied him an ear, he was not the person to officiate at the bridal, and that common sense is not exactly the presiding genius by which such matters are controlled. Johnson says, that on the stage the new opera was either hissed or neglected, and growls at the author for dedicating it, when published, to the Duchess of Marlborough, a woman wholly without pretensions to literature or taste ; not reflecting, that, if poets had been so fastidious in looking for patrons, they would have been at their wits' end where to find them.

The moralist is, however, compelled, by his sense of justice, to allow that the work is airy and elegant, engaging in its progress and pleasing in its close. He says that the subject is well chosen, the fiction pleasant, and the praise of Marlborough in it is the result of good-luck, improved by genius, as perhaps every work of excellence must be. Sir John Hawkins, who pretended to great connoisseurship in music, and must at least have been a perfect judge of a discord, having passed all his life in one, pronounced the music of Rosamond, which was the name of the opera, a “ jargon of sounds.” This, however, was the fault of the composer, or possibly might be attributed to the crabbed temper of the amateur ; and when Johnson pronounced the opera one of the best of Addison's compositions, it is clear that it could not have injured his fame. One good effect of it was to bring him into acquaintance with Tickell, then at Oxford, who, according to the fashion of the time, sent him some complimentary verses. He soon became the friend and as-

sociate of Addison, both in his literary and public labors, and always proved himself able, faithful, and honorable in every trust confided to his hands. The only complaint the world has to make of him is, that he has told so few particulars respecting the life of Addison ; this shows that Boswells, though their price in the market is not high, are beings of no small value ; and that the literary world would consult its own interest by making it a rule to encourage the multiplication of the race, rather than to ridicule and abuse them.

One of the last favors of the Whig administration was, to give Addison the place of secretary to the lord lieutenant of Ireland, who was then the Marquis of Wharton. At a later period, he visited the same country again, as secretary to Sunderland, who, after a fashion more common in church than in state, did not trouble himself to cross the Channel in the discharge of his official duty. Johnson expresses wonder, that Addison should have connected himself with a person so impious, profligate, and shameless as Wharton, when his own character was, in these respects, precisely the reverse of the other's. He appears to have mistaken the father for the Duke, his son, who was so notorious in connection with the Jacobite party. The elder was no saint certainly, but his character was light compared to the utter darkness of his son's. Archbishop King, a very high authority, says that he had known Wharton forty years, and always considered him a true patriot, and one who had his country's interest at heart ; no small praise for a statesman in any age, and one which in that season of all corruption it was a special honor to deserve ; so that Addison's connection with him was not that confederacy with sin which the great critic seems to have apprehended.

The conduct of the secretary, in both these missions, commanded respect and gave general satisfaction. But here, again, Johnson seems to intimate that he was rather avaricious in his ways. He tells us, on Swift's authority, that the secretary never remitted his fees of office in favor of his friends, giving as a reason, that if it was done in a hundred instances, it would be a loss to himself of two hundred guineas, while no friend would be a gainer of more than two. Swift, who was a great calculator, could not disapprove such exactness ; and it should not have been related, without stating at the same time, that Addison's revenues, which might have

been very great, had he, like other secretaries, received the presents offered by applicants for office, were reduced, by his determination to take nothing more than the regular fees, so that his income was comparatively small. Archbishop King speaks with great respect of his exemption from every thing like avarice and corruption in his discharge of duty, a virtue of which Ireland had not seen a very rich display, and which is not valued in proportion to its rarity in that unfortunate island even now.

The truth is, that Addison was one of those who care less for appearance than for reality ; he was not disposed to be generous, if that would make it impossible for him to be just. Unlike some other men of great talent, he never felt as if his genius released him from the obligations of common honesty. He would have despised himself, if he had made the flourish of doing liberal favors, while a creditor was suffering or complaining because his debt was unpaid. The knavish repudiation, which is so often tolerated in great men, was not consistent with his regard for his own honor. The feeling of the world with respect to these matters is one that brings a snare. So long as an eminent person is present, to awaken a personal interest in his readers or his party, they forgive him this lavish freedom with money which belongs to others, they forbear to press home that charge of dishonesty to which they know he must plead guilty. But when he is gone from the earth, and the Egyptian tribunal sits in judgment on the dead, that impartial court assumes as the law, that he should first of all have done justly ; for if, trampling on that obligation, he professed to have gone on to the love of mercy, it must condemn as a selfish crime that indulgence of feeling at the expense of principle ; and it decides that the crown of benevolence and generosity shall never be worn by the unjust, and that a man who is not honest enough to pay his debts, when he has the power, however highly he may be gifted, is the meanest work of God. Addison was sometimes very poor ; he was never rich ; his circumstances were such as to make exactness of calculation a necessity as well as a virtue. But it is idle to charge with avarice one who resisted temptations to gain wealth which he might have yielded to without censure from others ; and which he resisted simply because he feared the censure of his own heart.

It is quite evident, that, with this view of duty, he must

have been often troubled with the reckless improvidence of his friend Steele, who cared little how or from whom he obtained the means of expensive self-indulgence, and when he borrowed, never associated with the act the idea that he must afterwards pay. That Addison was kind and charitable to his follies is evident from their long attachment ; but when the revenue of the nation would not have been sufficient to supply Steele's wasteful profusion, it would have been as thoughtless as unavailing to put his own living into the hands of the spendthrift, only to see it fooled away. There are but few traces on record of their dealings, in which, of course, the borrowing was all on one side and the lending on the other ; but that Addison lent freely appears from a remark in one of Steele's letters to his wife, in which he says, that " he has paid Mr. Addison the whole thousand pounds." At a later time, he says to her, " You will have Mr. Addison's money to-morrow noon."

But Johnson has embalmed a story to Addison's disadvantage, of his sending an execution into Steele's house for a debt of a hundred pounds, communicated to him by Savage, which has appeared in different forms. One account represents Steele as telling the story with tears in his eyes ; and, if these had no other source than their mutual compotations, all such embellishments would be easily supplied by the same inspiration. Another version makes the sum a thousand pounds, and says that with a " genteel letter the balance of the produce of the execution was remitted to Steele." When Johnson adopted the story, it was so inconsistent with all that was known of Addison, that the world could not believe it ; he was asked to give his authority ; there was no other than that of Savage, which he knew was, if high in his estimation, low enough in that of others ; and, instead of resting it on that foundation, he said it was part of the familiar literary history of the day. Now there were times when Savage's powers of hearing and speaking were somewhat confused ; he may very easily have misinterpreted some hasty suggestion of Steele's, who, at times, labored under the same physical infirmity, into a statement of what had actually taken place ; and one must have an accurate knowledge of the circumstances, at least so far as to be informed whether Savage at the time was at the table or under it, before he can put implicit faith in a tradition based

on his authority alone. If the story is true in any part, it is rather strange that it did not interrupt the friendly harmony of the parties, which it certainly never did ; and the idea suggested by Thomas Sheridan was undoubtedly correct, that it was done, not so much to secure the debt, as to screen Steele's property from other creditors. The debt was real, without question ; Addison could not take such a step in collusion with Steele without giving it the aspect of an underhand proceeding, where fraud or conspiracy there was none. As this solution is perfectly consistent with Addison's character, who had not the least severity in his nature to lead him to such painful extremes, we should receive it at once as the satisfactory explanation ; that is, if any was needed beyond the circumstance, that the brains of both Steele and Savage were often rolling in those fine frenzies in which visions become reality, and the boundary separating fact and fiction becomes as variable as the profile of a wave of the sea.

Of the difficulty of ascertaining any fact thus told, and therefore of believing it, we have an illustration in what is said of Swift, who must be prominent in any history where he appears, and who was so wayward and peculiar, that his habits attracted more attention than those of other persons equally high. Odd enough, in all conscience, he was ; but this same Sheridan, in his biography, has represented him as making his appearance at Button's coffee-house, then the resort of the wits, in a rusty dress, with a rude and unsocial manner, and a freedom of talk, which, if it did not transcend all propriety, at least hung over the outer edge. These peculiarities gained him the name of the "Mad parson," a title to which he had, probably, a more serious claim than those who applied it were able to discern. The date of these proceedings was somewhere between Swift's first political pamphlet in 1701, and his Tale of a Tub in 1704 ; and, unless the relater of the story could plead somnambulism to the satisfaction of the great jury of the public, there was something in the dates, which, if challenged, must have sorely "plagued the inventor." Addison, who presided in these merry scenes, was all this while residing quietly in Europe ; and he did not set up his servant Button in this establishment, till some time after his return at the close of 1703 ; so that it was in some preëxistent state that Button and his coffee-house must have been regaled with the exploits

of the “Mad parson.” It seems a pity to spoil these pleasant stories by this narrow searching into their truth. In common cases, they may go for what they are worth ; but where a great man is charged with inhumanity, entirely at variance with all that is known of his character, there seems to be a reason for applying the test of circumstantial evidence, and figures which do not indulge themselves in lying, but on the contrary sometimes expose the carelessness, to say the least, of those who indiscreetly use them.

The whole history of Addison's relations with Swift is one that does him the greatest honor. It was no easy matter to keep always on good terms with such a man, whose natural disposition was cynical and sarcastic, and who was wrought up, by his strange fortune in politics, to a state of exasperation against all mankind ;—against the Whigs, because they had not prevented the necessity of his going over to the enemy ; and against the Tories, because, with his sharp discernment, he saw that they disliked while they flattered, and distrusted while they used him. He was not blind to the fact, that, with all his power to serve their cause, he had no power to serve his own interests, which he had no idea of disregarding. He fondly persuaded himself that he could do much for others, but it was clear that he could do nothing for himself ; and he was not the man to hold a barren sceptre, and be content with the gratification of vanity alone. This unsatisfactory position in which he stood soured his temper, which was not originally of the same growth with sugar-cane, and made his wayward humor, where he put no constraint upon it, about as much as the most Christian spirit could bear.

We have an example in the story told by Pope, of his paying him a visit in company with Gay, and not arriving till after the hour of supper. Swift felt it as a reflection on his hospitality ; he therefore calculated how much the meal would have cost him, and forced each of them to accept half a crown, in order that, if they told the story with the idea of his housekeeping which it implied, they might be under the necessity of reporting themselves as the subjects of his munificence too. There have been many attempts to solve the problem of his unhappy history ; but it seems to us, there can be no reasonable doubt that in these eccentricities of life, some of which were so painful, we see the approach of that insanity which clouded his fine understanding at last.

There are many shades of this unsoundness of mind, before it reaches the point at which responsibility ceases. Where that line is, and when the wayward mind passes over it, can be determined only by Him who reads the heart. There are many cases in which it would be consoling to believe, in spite of modern theologians, that demoniacal possession has not yet wholly ceased from the world.

Considering what Swift's character was, there was something remarkable in his constant respect and attachment for Addison, who was so prominent in the opposite party. Addison regarded him as the first writer of the age, and he, with the greatest deference for Addison's ability, paid a still more enviable homage to his acknowledged virtues. Even when there had been something like estrangement between them, on account of politics, he wrote to Stella, — “I yet know no man half so agreeable to me as he is.” When Addison first went to Ireland, Swift expressed the hope, in a letter to Archbishop King, that business might not spoil the best man in the world. To Addison himself he says, that every creature in the island who had a grain of worth venerated him, the Tories contending with the Whigs which should say the most in his praise ; and if he chose to be king of Ireland, there was not a doubt that all would submit to his power. At the same time, he says, — “I know there is nothing in this to make you of more value to yourself ; and yet it ought to convince you that the Irish are not an undistinguishing people.”

When Addison was in England, and Swift was daily expecting to hear of the predominance of his own party, he wrote to the Whig secretary to learn whether it was expedient to come over, knowing that he could trust his friendship and wisdom, though on the opposite side. His aim appears to have been a prebend then held by South ; but the old man, who was never particularly complaisant, was not disposed to die in order to oblige him. Addison was also consulted with the same sort of confidence by Wharton, who wished to hold his post to the last moment, and not resign till the new ministry were likely, if he delayed, to save him the trouble. But in those times of fierce excitement, when the nation was stunned by the fall of Marlborough, it was not possible for a man with Addison's powers to remain an inactive observer. He soon began to

write in reply to the *Examiner*, then conducted by Prior, a deserter from the Whigs ; and, without answering in the same tone of abuse which Prior employed, he showed how easy it was to put him down. Prior had brought forward in one of his papers the letter of a solemn correspondent, who recommended the *Examiner* to the people ; Addison said it reminded him of a physician in Paris, who walked the streets with a boy before him proclaiming, — “ My father cures all sorts of diseases ! ” to which the doctor responded, in a grave and composed manner, — “ The child says nothing but the truth ! ”

When the Whig *Examiner*, in which Addison wrote, came to an end, Swift rejoiced in his journal to Stella, that it was at last “ down among the dead men,” using the words of a popular song of the day. Johnson, though of the same party, remarks, — “ He might well rejoice at the death of that which he could not have killed.” The critic, with unusual impartiality, goes on to say, that since party malevolence has died away (it is pleasant to know that party spirit is not immortal), every reader must wish for more of the Whig *Examiners* ; since on no occasion was the genius of the writer more vigorously exerted, and the superiority of his powers more evidently displayed. Swift did not begin writing for the *Examiner* till Addison had ceased from the Whig *Examiner* ; they met often and with mutual satisfaction, but on some points there was necessarily a reserve. Swift remarks in his journal, — “ We are as good friends as ever, but we differ a little about party.” At a later period, — “ I love him as much as ever, though we seldom meet.” Early in the next year, he speaks of their never meeting ; but in the autumn he records that he supped at Addison’s lodgings, and says, that there was no man whose society was so attractive.

The alienation seems to have been wholly on Swift’s side ; it arose from his identifying Addison and Steele, for which he had no reason, and considering the former as laid under obligation by his attempts to save the latter. It is clear that Addison had no concern with Steele’s contrivances to secure a plank for himself at the shipwreck of his party ; he did not choose to talk with Swift on the subject, and the successful politician was wounded by this reserve. He complained that Addison hindered Steele from soliciting his

services, because he did not wish that his thoughtless friend should be obliged to a Tory ; while, in the same sentence, he says that Addison is asking his good offices to make another friend secretary in Geneva, which he shall use his influence to do. Even so it is with the jealous, ready to believe impossible contradictions. He resents Addison's unwillingness to ask a favor for one friend at the very moment when he is asking one for another. Truly, it must have required all Addison's wisdom, or rather his unconscious integrity, to avoid giving irritation to such a temper as this.

Johnson, speaking of Swift's kind services to Addison and his friends, says he wished others to believe what he probably believed himself, that they were indebted to his influence for keeping their places ; a form of expression which implies that the Doctor himself did not put implicit faith in his power. But the queen's death finished that overthrow of the Tory party which the quarrels of Oxford and Bolingbroke had begun, and Swift, losing by it the grant of a thousand pounds from the treasury, which he surrendered *multa gemens*, retreated to his deanery in Ireland, a home which he detested, but which was the only preferment that the ministers dared to give to a person of such unclerical fame. When Addison went again to Ireland as secretary to Sunderland, that nobleman, who, with a most affectionate indulgence for himself, was rather unforgiving to others, desired that he would hold no communication with Swift ; but with a spirit which did him honor, Addison chose to be the judge of his own society, and refused to give the pledge required. There is reason to suppose that they met in Ireland, though nothing is particularly set down respecting it ; and it is well known that they corresponded with each other till the death of Addison, each maintaining the greatest respect and regard for the other. Now, obviously, no man was ever less gifted with reverence by nature than Swift ; no one ever had a sharper eye to look through the follies and weaknesses of other men ; and it does seem to us, that his profound respect and confidence afford a better testimonial to the excellence of Addison than volumes of mere enthusiastic praise.

While the Whig party was shivering in the wind, and after it had gone down, Addison was more at leisure for literary labors. With the single exception of the *Whig Examiner*, and some not very complimentary notice of

Sacheverel, that ridiculous creature, who contrived to lift himself into a moment's notoriety, mistaking it for fame, he does not seem to have concerned himself much with public affairs. Meantime, Steele, who had great activity of mind together with his well known warmth of heart, and was not without that ability which perpetual action gives, had formed the plan of a periodical, to appear three times in the week, intended to contain observations on life and manners, together with the usual matter of newspapers. From its novelty, it met with some success ; and Addison, who was then in Ireland, accidentally meeting with some numbers of it, detected its author at once, by a remark which he had himself communicated to Steele, and which he knew was not likely to be indigenous in any common editor's head.

Steele was excellent at suggesting all manner of plans ; he was not without resources himself ; and he had extraordinary talents for securing the aid of others, and saving himself that labor in which he never delighted. By taking the name of Bickerstaff for the imaginary editor of the *Tatler*, he attracted attention, that being the name under which Swift had lately satirized Partridge, the almanac-maker, to death. This compliment, as was probably intended, secured the favor and assistance of the Dean. But the greatest windfall was the disposition of Addison to come to the rescue ; and surely never was there a channel better suited to make public those treasures of sharp observation, critical remark, and thoughtful humor in which he abounded, and which, if not published anonymously, and in this light and piecemeal form, might have been entirely lost to the world. Steele, who was never deficient in good feeling, was glad beyond measure when he found what aid he had the prospect of receiving ; he had no jealousy of that genius which he knew was to make such overshadowing eclipse of his own. In fact, he says that he rejoiced in being excelled ; influenced in part, doubtless, by a regard to the circulation of the paper, the profit of which was quite important to his precarious resources, but also enjoying the honor of heralding such talent as that of Addison, and claiming that gratitude for the service which the world was ready to give.

The world had more reason to be grateful for the service actually rendered by these publications, than it was able to estimate at the time ; afterwards, the change of manners

which they were so instrumental in producing evidently appeared to be a signal improvement, as well as a much-needed blessing. The word *gentleman* at that time was a word without a substantial meaning ; it simply denoted one who was not born to the worldly grandeur of nobleman, baronet, or 'squire. Nothing like refinement of manners or cultivation of mind was necessarily associated with it. So far as wigs, red heels, and similar decorations could invest one with the aspect of civilization, they were faithfully applied ; but though the faith yet lingers in the world, it is a mistake to suppose that tailors and hair-dressers can make a gentleman ; and after all those decorations were put on, it was felt that the gilding on the outside of the platter could not supply the place of that cleanliness within in which it was so wretchedly wanting. Not much could be gained by the teaching of foreign masters. Louis the Fourteenth, who was careful never to pass a chambermaid without raising his hat, was coarse as sea-sand in the substantial reality of refinement in the domestic and social relations ; and in England, whatever conventional system of manners might be ordained, the barbarism of party spirit, intemperate excess, and licentious indulgence was perpetually breaking through. It was necessary for some commanding influence to be exerted strongly enough to lift those virtues which were in low esteem, to put fashionable Vandalism to shame, to raise the woman above the courtesan, the flirt, or even the lady, and to show that the coxcomb, like Beau Fielding, the automaton with a title, or even coronets and orders without heads and hearts under them, were poor varieties of manufacture, compared with the real man.

It may have been, that there was a strong feeling standing ready to welcome the right kind of reformer. The beastly excesses of Charles's court must have produced a reaction in favor of decency, at least, if not of virtue ; and after the Revolution of 1688, the sovereign did not encourage rakes and rascals as much as he had done before. Still, though the evil of immorality did not show itself in the highest places as it did in that Pandemonium where such low bipeds as Sedley and Buckingham held sway, it was powerful, and prevailed to such a degree that it required a master to put it down. The right kind of reformer is one who understands the nature of the temptation, and the way

to approach the heart. There are many who lay claim to that honorable name, and, so far as good intentions go, deserve it, who resemble engineers laying siege to a city, and beginning their operations by knocking their own heads against the wall which they desire to overthrow. This promising experiment is repeated again and again by the reformers of the present day. By reason of the singular firmness of that part of their physical system, they escape the consequences that might be expected to follow, — which is indeed a crowning mercy ; but when they charge others less gifted in the roof-tree with inhumanity for not using the same battering-ram in their warfare, it may be well to show them that there are other means of contending with evil, less violent perhaps, but far more likely to accomplish the purpose ; and that the head, if it has any thing in it, can be used to more advantage in a different way.

Thus Addison, by an easy and graceful adaptation of his suggestions to the place and the time, gained an audience for himself, where others would not have been listened to. He improved the opportunity to impress lessons of wisdom and virtue, and he produced an effect much greater than is generally known. However little the world of that day was inclined to thoughtfulness, it was intellectual enough to admire his ability ; and when men's respect was thus secured, they could not treat with scorn the instructions of such a master. Thus, thousands who would not have paid regard to mere professional teaching were put in the way to hear of religion and duty, and still more, to see the pleasantness of those paths which he desired to have them tread.

Steele had the same good purpose of doing something to raise the prevailing tone of morals and manners ; but there was an obvious reason why he was not equal to the effort, inasmuch as he must needs have commenced the enterprise by taking heed to his own way of life. It is not by one who is able only to supply the gossip of the hour that such a work can be successfully done. He could not have effected much in that way without his more powerful coadjutor. But in the alliance, his knowledge of the world was not without its influence ; his ways of life brought him into acquaintance with all sorts of persons ; this gave him that knowing air which is so generally impressive ; and as the intimation was held out that real events and characters were alluded to, his

familiarity with men and manners made him formidable, since it was certain that nothing which he knew would be withheld from the public by excessive caution or reserve. His short narratives, imaginary letters, and various particulars of the kind, which have now lost their interest, were then attractive and exciting. That there was much chaff to the wheat is certain ; still, there was something there ; and even now, though the day of such writings is over, those who have any love of common sense or literary history will find as much to gratify their intellectual taste, if they happen to have any, by reading the Tatler, as in dozing away life by lying parallel with the horizon on the ill-savour'd heaps of George Sand, and all that unsanctified crew.

To the Tatler succeeded the Spectator, a work of higher order, published every day, and almost entirely abstaining from party strife, with the view of making more elevating impressions on the public mind. The Tatler was commenced and closed without Addison's knowledge ; but the new paper was more under his command ; and in it he distinguished his own articles by certain letters which were afterwards well understood. Tickell rather superfluously says, that he did so, because he did not wish to usurp the praise of others ; Steele insinuated, that it was because he could not without discontent allow others to share his own. Johnson quotes this last remark, as if he thought there was cause for the complaint which it implied ; but why, in the name of reason, should Addison surrender all the credit of his own labor and talent to another ? One would think, that, after having done so through the whole existence of the Tatler, and having in that way lifted it into favor and circulation, it was about as much as one, who had no special claim upon him, could rightfully demand. And we should like well to know how many literary men there are, who, while conscious, as he must have been, that they are the life and soul of a publication, would allow others to appropriate all the profits and the praise.

Meantime, it may be well to state that the meaning of the Clio letters was not known at the time, and the reader of the day had no means, except internal evidence, of distinguishing one writer from another. Johnson adds to this a disparaging remark, which he might well have spared, saying he had heard that Addison eagerly seized his share of the income of

the *Spectator*. He does not give his authority ; probably he had none, more than popular report or conjecture. But it would be difficult to give any reason why Addison should be counted avaricious for deriving some benefit from his labor ; and Johnson should have been too well acquainted with what is rational and right, to imply such a groundless charge. His circumstances were not such as to raise him above the necessity of this exertion ; and it does seem poor and unworthy enough to censure him for doing what every one else would have done in his place, and at the same time withhold all credit from his generosity on the former occasion, when he did what not one man in fifty thousand could find it in his heart to do.

The *Spectator* soon gave evidence of the advantage of having more of Addison's interest in it, and of being wholly under his control. He excluded politics almost entirely, that pernicious indulgence by which Steele had run the bark of his own fortunes ashore. The small gossip and scandal, allusions to which had been thought necessary to supply attraction to the *Tatler*, were thrown overboard without ceremony, and preparation was made to give the *Spectator* a tone serious, earnest, and high. It was a bold undertaking ; few of our *Dailies* would venture quite so far ; but the great master who had it in charge, with his endless variety of resources, was able to make it popular, and at the same time an authority in his own age, and to render it through all future time a subject of admiration to the intellectual, — alas that they should be so few ! Those who wanted entertainment were refreshed with the *Freezing of Words*, *Shallum*, and *Hilpah*, not to speak of *Sir Roger de Coverley*, perhaps the most refined and delicate piece of humor which the English or any language affords. The imaginative reader was delighted with the *Vision of Mirza*, and similar fancies, playing like sunbeams on the solemn field of duty which was spread out before his mind. In his critical papers, his object is not to display his own profoundness, but to bring his readers into sympathy with his own perfect taste ; and he treats with easy and familiar grace the work before him, whether it be the grand and gigantic scenery of the *Paradise Lost*, or the charm of simple description in *Chevy Chase* and the *Babes in the Wood*. Nothing can be better suited to its purpose than the moral and religious portion of these writings ;

his interest in the subject is not got up for the occasion, like the Catskill cascade, playing when they let on the water ; it comes like a clear stream, flowing from a deep well-spring in his heart. With all his earnestness against the Free-thinkers, who, it must be remembered, were unthinking scoffers, ridiculing what they did not understand, he is entirely exempt from narrowness, and maintains that kind and cheerful bearing which religion should always wear.

The style of these celebrated papers is, as every one knows, as near perfection as any thing ever has been, — artless, unaffected, transparent, but always manly and strong. Like Dryden, he followed the example of Tillotson, whose discourses, though as sermons they are no great things, were excellent in their unpretending English style, illustrating the truth, that simplicity is the best of graces, and retains its attraction when ornament, high finish, and cumbrous decoration lose their interest and pass away. As we intimated, the Spectator is not so much read at present as it deserves. The present age abounds, more than it is aware of, in various literary affectations. The Muse in fashion screws her countenance into various contortions, and “looks delightfully with all her might,” so that it is almost impossible to tell what her natural expression, if she ever had any, may have been. Possibly a return to these writings might do something to restore the modesty of nature. The experiment is worth trying, at least so far as to know for ourselves whether our taste is depraved or not ; if we can take pleasure in these quiet and unexciting works, we may have reason for confidence, that, both in literature and morals, it is still in harmony with that which is good, and which, though neglected at times, will never lose the veneration of those fortunate individuals who are equipped with a mind and a heart.

The Spectator was suddenly brought to a close without consulting with Addison, and the Guardian established in like manner, without the concurrence of the person on whom their character depended. But he was not the man to be offended by such want of attention, though, under the circumstances, a little more deference to his judgment would have done no harm. The Guardian, though not, according to Swift's wicked expression, “cruel dry,” was of a graver cast than its predecessors ; and in the earlier parts, where we

cannot trace the hand of the master, it is less interesting than the others. Still, it stands high in comparison with other writings of the kind, with the exception of its own ancestry ; and Addison's part in it, though less humorous than his former efforts, is in every way worthy of his fame. Johnson complains of its occasional liveliness as inconsistent with its professed character of *Guardian* ; we do not see why. There is no reason why, even in one who guards the public morals, an attempt to make others smile should be a sin ; and even if it were not quite in keeping with the profession, still, as punishment is intended for the prevention of crime, and there are so few human writings which offend by reason of being sprightly overmuch, there is no crying necessity at present for exacting dulness as a religious virtue, or scouting pleasantry as at war with the best interests of mankind.

The work did not extend beyond two volumes, not from want of favor or circulation, but because Steele, with his usual restlessness, longed to be engaged in those politics from which Addison withheld him, and in which he was sure to injure himself, without doing service to any party. Later in life, he involved himself in a world of embarrassment, by a wild speculation for carrying live fish to market ; at this time, he was engaged in carrying his fish to the political market, where he succeeded only so far as to bring himself into near acquaintance with the frying-pan and the fire. Shortly after, he met with an unusual measure of success, not, however, in consequence of any happy arrangements of his own, but because the act of Providence unexpectedly removed the queen from her subjects, who were quite ready to spare her to the skies. It is matter of surprise to us that historians do not set down the fact, which to our minds seems clear, though the politicians of her day had no means of knowing it, that the ascendancy of Bolingbroke and Oxford, and the fall of Marlborough, were owing, not, to use Burnet's elegant expression, to his "brimstone of a wife," nor to spilling a cup of coffee on the royal gown, but to the attachment of the queen to her exiled brother, and the concurrence of the Tory ministry in her wish and purpose to restore him to the throne. The communication of that administration with the Pretender can now be fully proved ; the living actions and the dying words of the queen leave no doubt of her accession to their conspiracies ; and this fact, once established,

explains many things at which the world then wondered, and which, on any other theory, it is hardly possible to understand.

It was the agitation of these political factions that brought forward the celebrated *Cato*, a drama which Addison had commenced many years before, which he had labored upon during his travels, and which he was induced to finish at last, not from his own interest in it, but from the solicitations of his friends, who believed it might have an effect favorable to the Whigs in those doubtful times of party. The Tory house was divided against itself ; the Whigs, who saw in this another pleasing instance of Satan against Satan, took courage from the prospect of their fall. The queen, too, was not immortal, and her habits of life were of the kind not favorable to strength of purpose or length of days. If, as Lucan says, *Cato*, unlike the gods, was more inclined to sympathize with the weaker party, the great Roman in England at the time might have been sorely puzzled to know which way to lean. In fact, the moment the play was published and acted, both parties claimed *Cato*, not so much because they cared for Addison as the author, as from their determination to appear to the nation as the champions of the free.

Drury Lane, however thronged in later times, certainly never witnessed more excitement than on this occasion ; the performance was then in the afternoon, and, dinner to the contrary notwithstanding, the theatre was besieged before the hour of noon. Steele, who had undertaken to pack an audience, found that he could pack the whole city of London without any sort of trouble. Booth established his fame in the part of *Cato*. Bolingbroke made him a present of fifty guineas, as he said, “for defending the cause of liberty so well against a Perpetual Dictator” ; in which that versatile personage made it clear to the player, that there were actors, not trained to the boards, who were infinitely better than he. The Whigs were not to be outdone in that way ; they, too, came with their gifts and laurels, so that, according to Garth's expression, — and no man ever said any thing better, — “It was extremely probable that *Cato* would have something to live upon after he died.”

But there is one thing which in this connection should be faithfully remembered. Johnson has thrown the shadow of avarice over the name of Addison, by the saying, which we

have before referred to, respecting his avidity for profits and praise. Colley Cibber, who at that time was a joint patentee and manager of Drury Lane, says that the author made a present to him and his brethren of the profits, which were neither few nor small. This was not like a miser ; it certainly does not look like eager avidity for money, to give up so freely that which nothing but generosity called him to surrender. And this is a remarkable illustration, showing how a thoughtless phrase of a biographer may fix in the public mind for ages a false impression, though many striking actions, and the whole tenor of the life, show to those who examine the subject that it must be the reverse of true.

Addison does not seem to have anticipated much success, if any, not thinking the drama suitable for the stage. Dr. Young says, that Dryden, to whom it was submitted, predicted that it would not meet with the reception which it deserved. But this must refer to some earlier attempt, or to the part which was written early, certainly not to the finished play, inasmuch as Dryden had left the stage of this world at least a dozen years before. Pope, however, did express the same opinion. When Addison told him that the *Rape of the Lock* was a delicious piece as it stood, and advised him not to alter it, Pope ascribed the counsel to jealousy on the elder poet's part. How easy would it be to attribute this advice to Addison to unworthy dread of Cato's anticipated renown ! Addison, so far from resenting it, only said that he was of the same opinion, but that he had submitted to the judgment of his friends, who were importunate to have it appear. He certainly hated the labor of completing it ; he said that he should be glad to have some one do it for him ; but when Hughes rather valiantly made the attempt, he saw that it might be brought to an end in good earnest, if left to an inferior hand. Hughes consoled himself for his failure by writing some laudatory lines, which, according to the usual fashion, were afterwards published with the play.

There were several others who took the same opportunity of shining out to the world. Young, Tickell, and Philips are familiar names ; but there were others more questionable ; among the rest were some lines left with the printer, which, Johnson says, are the best, but which " will lose somewhat of their praise when the author is known to be Jeffreys " !

There has been a question who this individual could be. Some have supposed that it was the judge of that name ; if so, he was more just in letters than in law. But he had been for about twenty years in the other world, where there is reason to suppose that he was less pleasantly engaged than in writing poetry. The person in question was a much more harmless gentleman, who did execution on literary, not human, subjects, and has escaped the doom of everlasting fame.

These flourishes of adulation were not to the taste of the author, and he did his best to decline them. In a letter still preserved, he endeavours to put aside the compliment without wounding the feelings of the person who sent the lines ; but as it was not so easy to avoid the honor without inflicting pain on the writers, he submitted to the necessity, and let their little wherries sail by his side. But there was one point, where his honor was concerned, on which he took open and manly ground. He intended to dedicate the play to the Duchess of Marlborough, who was then fallen from her height, and unable to serve his interests if she would. It was not pledged or promised, but his purpose was known. Meantime, the queen, who, without any passion for literature, desired the honor of patronizing Cato, sent him an intimation that a dedication to herself would give her pleasure. He did not choose to take the hint, and, neither to compromise his own independence, nor to offer a needless affront to his sovereign, he sent it forth without a dedication, which was uncommon at that day. But the manliness of the proceeding was more unusual still, when, had he been so disposed, he could have gained favor by the attention, and silenced all objection by pleading the royal command.

This tragedy has been a subject of great admiration, not unmixed with bitter censure, — censure which falls harmless, because it only charges him with not doing what he never wished nor intended to do. In the desperate feuds between the partisans of the classical and romantic schools, every writer connected with the one must needs be ridiculed and disowned by the other. But those who can break through this narrowness of creeds can easily see that these are matters of taste. There is no reason why every thing should be conformed to a single standard ; Addison never pretended to be Shakspeare ; the last thing in his mind was

to enter into comparison with the unrivalled. His classical prepossessions inclined him to side with the French ; it was in France, indeed, that he set himself seriously about the play ; and the only question is, whether he succeeded in what he wished to do, — a question which the world has pretty decidedly answered. Johnson, in his conversation, said that nothing would be more ridiculous than to see a girl weep at the representation of Cato. But what a standard is this ! At the performance of his own Irene, no one would ever have cried, except to see the end of it ; and it would have gone hard enough with his own Muse, if pathetic interest was so essential a thing. But an audience may be very tolerably entertained without going to the extent of crying. With all his variety of power, Addison never aimed at the pathetic ; he dealt more in smiles than tears. It is rather remarkable that he could have thrown so much affecting interest round the Stoic, — not because his grand and solemn bearing is not impressive to the feeling, but because the sympathies of audiences and readers grow accustomed to their familiar courses, and such is not the channel in which they are expected to flow. Though the love-scenes may not be happily conceived, and the tragic interest may not be of the kind most in request with the present play-going generation, this work has a full testimony to its excellence in the place which it holds in the memories of cultivated men. The fine images and sentiment in which it abounds, as Miss Aikin justly remarks, are in constant use, even by those who do not know from what source they drew them.

Dr. Johnson, for some reason or other, has transcribed a great part of Dennis's criticism on Cato, which drags its slow length like a snake through his pages. It deserves attention, not for its justice, though it is not wholly untrue, but for its opening the way to that ill-feeling on the part of Pope toward Addison, which has done more than any thing else to mislead the reading world. This ill-starred critic, whose chief sin seemed to be an utter obtuseness on the subject of poetry, had previously regaled himself by tearing the Rape of the Lock and the Essay on Criticism in pieces with his savage teeth. This was an offence which Pope, who, like sundry other Christians, performed the duty of forgiveness in a way of his own, made a point of resenting. The time was come when he thought he could do it with a better grace

than by avenging injuries of his own ; accordingly, under the profession of defending Addison, he fell upon Dennis in a coarse and personal lampoon, which was bitter enough to gratify his own spleen, but so contrived, all the while, as to leave the objections to Cato unanswered. Addison, who, with the feelings of a gentleman, had abstained from all reply, did not choose to appear as confederate with another to resent the injury in an underhand way. Nor did he feel under particular obligation to Pope, for holding him up as a shield, while he indulged his own revenge. The low character of the attack, also, was one for which he could not be responsible to the world. He therefore said, that he could not, either in honor or conscience, be privy to such treatment, and that, if he did take notice of Mr. Dennis's objections, it should be in a different way. This was high-minded and honorable ; but it showed Pope that his artifice was seen through, and that his coarseness was disapproved. It was therefore the beginning of sorrows ; he never afterwards was able to forget or forgive it ; and his jealous and irritable feeling having been thus awakened, every word and deed of Addison was perversely misinterpreted. When he once had come under censure of that high authority, he determined to break it down.

Pope was sufficiently kind and manly in other matters, but his jealousy amounted to disease, wherever his poetical reputation was concerned ; and it is surprising to see to what base arts he descended to spread his own renown and take vengeance on all who stood in his way. The reply of Dennis to Pope's abominable satire was a letter from Jacob, the editor of the earlier *Lives of the Poets*, stating that Pope's life had been submitted to the bard himself, to receive his improvements and corrections ; so that he had indorsed his own praises, which many would gladly do for themselves, but would not so willingly appear to have done. The same underhand course, by which, under pretence of defending Cato, he had fought his own battle, was resorted to on many occasions. In the *Key to the Lock*, which is known to have been written by himself, he insatiably endeavoured to fix the attention of the public on a work which was already sufficiently admired. In a remarkable paper in the *Guardian*, he pretends to show how superior Philips's pastorals are to his own, at the same time giving

extracts with comments which make them ludicrous to the last degree.

But his most singular effort of self-applause was the publication of his letters, all of which have a labored appearance, as if written, as no doubt they were, for the public eye. Johnson's long head suspected, though he could not prove, this extraordinary juggle ; in which Pope, finding that a correspondence with a friend, improperly published, had attracted some attention, contrived that an imperfect collection of his letters should be thrown in the way of the bookseller Curril, who had no delicacy in that nor any thing else. Accordingly they were printed ; whereupon Pope, pretending to be greatly aggrieved, complained to the House of Lords. Nothing of course was done, as no law was violated ; but it gave the poet the opportunity which he wanted, of publishing his letters in full ; and, sure enough, they appeared, so industriously fine, so nicely spangled with fine sentiments and brilliant figures, as to bear on the face of them the assurance, that, if written in the first instance to individuals, they were in fact addressed to the world.

The coolness between Addison and Pope, and Pope's revenge in consequence of it, have had such an effect upon the reputation of the former, that the matter requires to be examined at large. It is, at the same time, one of the most curious problems in literary history. It has engaged the inquiring attention of many ; among others, of Sir William Blackstone, the light of the English law, who summed up the evidence on the subject, but pronounced no judgment, though his charge leaned evidently in favor of Addison. But there are one or two things to be considered, to which he and others who have discussed the question have not paid sufficient regard. One is, that, while Addison maintained a high and dignified reserve, Pope took every opportunity to tell his own story, and so to avenge his imaginary wrongs ; not only repeating it to his parasite Spence, who received it as so much gospel, but by immortalizing it in the portrait of Atticus, one of those admirable caricatures which no one knew so well how to draw, and which, while they abounded in wit and discriminating satire, were deficient in nothing but the weightier matters of justice and truth. The other thing to be regarded is the character of the two men ; this affords strong presumptive evidence on the subject which is most likely to have been

unworthily jealous of the other? Was it the one whose reputation was established, who was reverenced to his heart's desire, and, what was more, who wrote anonymously, and rather with a desire to serve his friends than to establish his own fame, and whose high standing in politics also gave him other interests to divide his attention with this? Or was it he whose temper was so irritable, waspish, and easily excited, that he spent his days in an endless quarrel with poets both high and low, and who had the folly, driven by this mad jealousy, to embalm in rather a filthy preparation the memories of his opposers, who, but for this satire, which injures the writer more than any one else, would have died and been forgotten in a day? One would say beforehand, that the latter would be the one to take offence and bear malice, and so accordingly it proved. Had it been a possible thing, Addison would have lived on good terms with him, and he did so as long as it was in his power.

We have already mentioned the attack on Dennis, and Addison's reprehension of it, as the beginning of this disunion. Dennis always declared, that Pope applied to Lintot to engage him to write against Cato; but though Dennis probably believed it, there may have been some mistake in an application thus received at second-hand. But the next source of trouble is entirely open to the eye. Pope, having finished his first draught of the Rape of the Lock, communicated it to Addison, telling him, at the same time, of his purpose to introduce the Sylphid machinery, which he afterwards did with so much success. Addison, knowing that it was excellent as it stood, and that such alterations were generally failures, told him that it was *merum sal*, a delicious little piece, and advised him to leave it as it was.

Warburton, who, learned and able as he was in some things, was perversely obtuse in others, says that "upon this, Mr. Pope began to open his eyes to Addison's character." Truly, the operations of opening and shutting the eyes were strangely confounded in his mind. What was there in this which any man of sense could have received as jealous or unkind? If, after the poet had wrought out the Rosicrucian machinery, Addison had counselled him to suppress it, there might have been some little ground for the suspicion; but nothing, save the most watchful jealousy, could have taken alarm at the wise advice not to endanger that which was

already excellent by an attempt to make it better. Johnson says the same thing ; he admits that it might have been done reasonably and kindly ; and really, nothing can be more unmanly than the attempt to find a cause of quarrel and a justification of bitterness in such a harmless affair. Indeed, it seems so much like insanity, that it could hardly be explained, without looking for the origin of the difficulty in the spirit of party. Pope, who, as Johnson says, was apt to be diffuse on the subject of his own virtues, pretended to be exempt from political feeling ; but he was intimate with the detected Jacobites, Atterbury and Bolingbroke, and it is now well known that he was a bitter Tory in his heart. His other fancied causes of uneasiness, then, were increased by this venomous element, which poisons every heart in which it dwells.

Having thus opened his eyes to Addison's character, without that illumination which would have been more to the purpose on the subject of his own, it was not long before Pope was to receive another similar injury, which made his vision still clearer. He had undertaken the translation of the *Iliad*, — not, though he says it, by the advice of Addison ; for the letter to which he alludes does not bear out this assertion, though it contains strong expressions of confidence in his ability and of interest in his success. It contained an intimation which may have been distasteful to Pope, who so studiously disclaimed any bias from party spirit, in the counsel which Addison gave him for his general conduct, not to content himself with half the nation for his admirers, when he might as easily have them all ; but with this exception, if it is one, the tone of the letter is eminently kind. Having heard that some of Philips's hard speeches against Pope had reached the sensitive bard, Addison called on him to assure him that he had no sympathy with what Philips might have said in his dispraise.

It is easy to see, from the tone of Pope's letters, that he feels a vexation which he can see no good reason to indulge or to avow ; conscious that he was not friendly to Addison, he amused himself, as usual in such cases, by the faith that he himself was all amiableness, and that Addison was an enemy to him. But he found it easier to impose on himself than on others. We find Jervas, the painter, good-naturedly endeavouring to soothe him by relating Addison's kind expressions respecting him, and his desire to serve his brother-poet,

when his party had reascended to power. Pope's reply is clear evidence of that state of mind, which, not wholly content with itself, is still less disposed to be satisfied with others. Whoever has encountered such a disposition knows, that as in feeding cross animals, it is well to look after one's fingers ; every favor done to the jealous is distorted into an injury, received without thankfulness, and answered with some snapish revenge.

Addison certainly tried hard to bear himself in such a manner as to calm down those unreasonable suspicions. Pope had desired him to look over the first books of his *Iliad*. Addison asked him to dine with him at a tavern, and there told him that he would rather be excused from it at that time, since his friend Tickell, when at Oxford, had translated the first book of that poem, and was about to submit it to the world. Tickell had desired him to examine it ; and if, at the same time, he should do the same service for another, it might place him in a delicate position between the two. Now, in common cases, there could be no reason for this caution ; but Addison knew his man, and, being well aware how hard it was to keep the peace, was earnest always to keep to the windward of every affair in which it might be endangered. Pope, however, did not see through his reasons ; he told him that Tickell had a perfect right to publish his translation, and he to look it over ; but if the first book was thus precluded, he would be glad to send him the second. Addison thus found it impossible to escape ; he looked over it, and in a few days returned it with high expressions of praise. Afterwards, when Pope's first four books were ready for the subscribers, Tickell published his first book, and this appears to have rekindled all his former suspicion.

But why had not Tickell a right to publish his fragment ? and how did he, by this proceeding, cross the path of one who was so far before him ? Besides, if it were wrong, why was Addison to answer for it ? Though Tickell was his friend, Addison did not keep him in leading-strings, nor feed him with a spoon. The truth of the matter was, that Addison, when solicited to give his opinion, had said that both were good, but that Tickell's had more of the Greek ; this was doubtless his opinion, and there was no disparagement to Pope in declaring it. But it so happened that this was the very point in which Pope was conscious that he was wanting.

When he commenced the work, he was so oppressed with the difficulty thence arising, that “he wished somebody would hang him”; and the literary world are tolerably unanimous in the opinion, that, however pleasing his *Iliad* is in itself, there is something quite too modern about it to give much idea of the original. It is like the statues of Louis the Fourteenth, in which, though he wore the classical drapery, he always insisted on retaining the Parisian wig. A scholar, like Addison, would be likely to feel this want of the Homeric simplicity; and why he should be rigidly silent on the subject, it is not easy to understand, when, at the same time, he awarded the translation the full measure of praise which it deserved.

There is no doubt, however, that Pope, all the while, believed Addison himself to be the translator of the first book, which had appeared in Tickell's name. He did not say this while Addison was living; then it could have been easily disproved; but he was himself so much given to artifice and stratagem, that he easily suspected it in others. He says, in a letter to Addison, — “I shall never believe that the author of *Cato* can say one thing and think another.” And yet it is plain that he did so believe; these words are ample proof that he did, for he evidently meant to hint, that the writer of the high sentiments of the tragedy should be above deception in matters of ordinary life. But it might have been well for him to consider what was implied in this charge. It accused Addison of falsehood, repeated again and again. Addison had told him that the work was Tickell's; now, if it was his own, there was no reason why he should not say so; he was under no obligation to refrain from doing a thing because Pope had done it before him. So far from operating to the prejudice of Pope's interests, it went forth to the world with a declaration that it was not to be continued, because the work was already executed by an abler hand. Supposing that Addison would stoop to prevaricate, — and the whole tenor of his life made such a thing incredible, — how was any one in his senses to believe that he did so without any inducement whatever? No man lies, without something to fear, or something to gain by it. The process has no delight in itself to give it attraction. But such was Pope's absurd exaggeration of the importance of his own undertakings, that he was able to work himself into the monstrous belief of

Addison's manœuvring thus disgracefully in this matter, where he could have nothing to hope for and nothing to dread.

But the reader may ask if there was no evidence upon which to ground these suspicions. If he is not familiar with the subject, he will be rather surprised to learn, that there is nothing whatever but a remark of Dr. Young, who, when he heard that the translation was written at Oxford, said that he was there well acquainted with Tickell, who communicated his writings to him, and he thought it strange that he should have been silent in respect to such an undertaking. This negative testimony certainly does not amount to much ; it was possible that Tickell might have been so employed without making it known to his friends. It was possible that Addison might have been mistaken in the impression that it was written at Oxford. But really, if one man is to be charged with falsehood, because another man has no other means than his word of knowing what he says to be true, a great mortality of human reputations must follow the application of a standard so severe. Miss Aikin has had access to the Tickell papers, which are still carefully preserved ; and among them is a letter from Dr. Young on the subject of this translation, treating it as Tickell's own, telling him that Pope's is generally preferred, but that his is allowed to be excellent, and, he has no doubt, will at last be able to carry the day.

Those papers show, also, that instead of this first book of the Iliad having been translated out of hostility to Pope, Tickell had made arrangements with a bookseller to translate and publish the whole ; the very preface prepared for it is still in existence, containing judiciously formed principles on which he had intended to proceed. Spence, who was not the wisest of mankind, said that he was confirmed in the impression that Addison wrote it, by the circumstance that Tickell once had an opportunity of denying it, which he did not improve. But it must be remembered that no one ventured to bring the charge in Addison's lifetime ; that Tickell, who, according to Spence himself, was a very "fair and worthy man," could not have been aware that such a calumny was spread ; and that if any one had asked him whether he had engaged in a fraud to act the liar's part, he might have been likely to withhold a reply to an application

so elegantly presented. Old D'Israeli, whose researches were sometimes as valuable as his son's novels are worthless, — and human laudation can no farther go, — not having seen the Tickell papers, believed what Wharton endeavoured to prove. But even in the absence of all external testimony, it is hard to conceive how any one can believe, that a man so exemplary as Addison would engage in a wretched lying conspiracy, by which no earthly purpose, not even that of injury to Pope, had he desired it, could possibly have been answered.

There was but one other thing which Pope could allege in justification of his bitter feeling towards Addison. It seems that Gildon had written a life of Wycherley, in which he abused Pope and his relations; and Pope says young Lord Warwick told him, that Addison had encouraged Gildon to write the scandal, and afterwards paid him ten guineas for doing it. Blackstone sets down this story as utterly incredible, so inconsistent is it in every respect with the character of Addison. It is quite possible that, when Gildon's work was presented to him, he may, before reading it, have given something to the author as matter of charity; but it is nonsense, on such an account, to hold him responsible for what the work contained. Here again, what could he gain by such a proceeding? There was nothing but malice to be gratified in any such way, and if he ever had any malignity, he succeeded better in keeping it to himself than is usual with the sons of men. Besides, if a man of his high standing could have descended to such a measure, is it likely that he would have deposited the secret in a pudding-bag of a boy? There is often in such hopeful youths a good portion of thoughtless malice; even if one of them should lie, it is not a thing wholly without example; but whatever the young lord's communication may have been, we have only Pope's version of it, who probably was not in the best state to understand or remember it as it was; for, according to his own account, he sat down and wrote a violent letter to Addison, charging him with dirty ways, and, among other insults, painting the character of Atticus as it was first written. To this precious missive, Addison, who doubtless perceived that it was impossible to be at peace with such a person, never deigned a reply. Pope says that he "used him civilly ever after," which is more than most men would

have done. No thoughtful and unprejudiced person will think that Addison ought to have cleared himself from such imputations ; for what is character worth, if it will not shield its possessor from such aspersions as this ?

That part of this unfortunate history which has been most injurious to the memory of Addison is the account of a last interview with Pope, said to have been arranged by their mutual friends, when Pope expressed a wish to hear his own faults, and spoke as if he did not feel that he had been himself the aggressor. It is said that Addison was so transported with passion, that he accused Pope of upstart vanity, and reminded him that he had been under the greatest literary obligation to him, giving as an instance a line in the *Messiah*, which he had essentially improved ! After some words of contempt for Pope's *Homer*, he concluded, in a " low, hollow voice of feigned temper," with advice to Pope to be more humble, if he wished to appear well to the world. Pope retorted in the like strain, abusing Addison for his jealousy of the merit of others, and similar failings ; and after this exchange of confectionery, the two poets departed in peace, to meet no more.

Internal evidence alone would show that this must have been a poor fabrication. The benevolent fashion in which the interview was conducted was not strictly Addisonian ; and the favor with which he upbraided Pope, that of spoiling a very good line of the *Messiah*, was not enough to put the younger poet under bonds of gratitude to the end of time. If he had wished to insist on this point, he might have referred to all he had written in favor of Pope, as affording a less questionable claim upon his grateful feeling. But it is needless to dwell on this. For no one can doubt, that had there been a word of truth in this story, Pope would not have said, some time before, that Addison " used him civilly ever after " ; and as Pope was careful, in his conversations with Spence, to give all his causes of complaint against Addison, with perhaps a trifle over, he must have been loud and long on the subject of such a memorable passage, had it ever occurred.

But the story was not manufactured till after he was in the dust. After his death, appeared a *Life of Pope*, without any publisher's name, but purporting to be written by William Ayre, Esq., and to contain facts drawn from

“ original manuscripts and the testimony of persons of honor.” D’Israeli calls it a “ huddled compilation ” which appeared in “ a suspicious form.” Probably there was truth in speaking of the information as original, if much of it was like the story related above. It occasioned some remark when it first appeared, and was openly ascribed to Curril, who was no doubt the person of honor in question, and whose honor was so well established, that nothing could gain credit for a moment which rested on his testimony alone. He was in the habit of publishing these Lives, containing large measures of “ original ” information, drawn from conversation in coffee-houses, and other unquestionable sources, not to speak of the invention of the writer, and from this latter source must have come this narrative of the last farewell of Pope and Addison, concerning which D’Israeli innocently says, — “ Where he obtained all these interesting particulars I have not yet discovered.”

One of the most curious illustrations of Pope’s state of mind, and one which shows the extravagance of his peculiar feeling, is what he said to Spence respecting Addison’s sacred poems, those beautiful lyrics, which have all the spiritual grace of earnest devotion, together with a sweetness of language and measure which, unfortunately, is seldom found in Christian hymns. Tonson, having some pique against Addison, said that when he wrote them, he intended to take orders and obtain a bishopric. But Tonson honestly gave the reason of this very natural surmise ; it was, — “ I always thought him a priest in his heart.” Jacob could not conceive of a man’s writing hymns and feeling the spirit of devotion, without something to gain by the operation ; and his result was obtained simply by putting two and two together, not because there was any external reason for the suspicion in any rational mind. Johnson admits, that Pope’s thinking this notion of Tonson’s worth preserving is a proof that some malignity, growing out of their former rivalry, lingered in his heart ; for, as he says, “ Pope might have reflected that a man who had been secretary of state to Sunderland knew a nearer way to a bishopric than by defending religion or translating the Psalms.” He might also have said, as Pope was well aware, that King David himself, had he been extant, might have sung himself to everlasting bliss before he would have reached an English mitre by the force of piety and inspiration alone.

To the same source, without doubt, may be traced the impression that Addison was given to excess in wine ; for not an intimation of the kind can be found in any authority save that of Spence, who was the retailer of all Pope's uncharitable suspicions. He said that Addison kept late hours with his friends at taverns ; but he does not charge him with excess ; and when we know the prevailing habits of gentlemen at that day, such a practice does not imply, by any means, what it would now. It was the usual way in which they associated with their familiar companions. We may see, that even so late as Boswell's time, more than half a century after, the same custom prevailed in London, and was not then inconsistent with propriety and good morals, though it would be differently regarded now. Swift writes to Colonel Hunter, — “ Sometimes Mr. Addison and I steal to a bottle of bad wine, and wish for no third person but you, who, if you were with us, would never be satisfied without three more.” This passage, which applies more directly to the question than any other recorded, implies that he was not a slave, nor even inclined, to excess. We find, too, that he was in the habit of retiring from this cheerful society to the solitude of country lodgings, as more suited to his labors and more congenial with his taste.

The disease under which he suffered, and of which he died, the asthma, was not such as intemperance brings on. In the *Spectator*, he speaks of this habit in a manner which it does not seem credible he should have adopted, if he could have been reproached with the transgression which he so earnestly condemned. Johnson maintains, what he had found in Spence, that Addison sat late in taverns and drank too much wine ; but he also says, that Addison's professions and practice could not have been much at variance, since, though he passed his life in a storm of faction, and was formidable for his activity and conspicuous for his station, his enemies never contradicted the character that was given of him by his friends, and he retained the reverence, if not the love, of those who were opposed to him and his party. Moreover, the same great critic says, that he dissipated the prejudice which had long connected gayety with vice, and easy manners with looseness of principle ; he restored morality to its dignity, and taught virtue not to be ashamed. This is an elevation of character above all Greek, above all Roman fame.

Though we are singularly deficient in all information respecting the familiar manners of a person so distinguished, these terms are not descriptive of the influence and character of an intemperate man ; and since there is no shadow of authority to charge him with excess save that of Spence, and his information was derived from Pope, who cherished hatred and horror for the “ little senate at Button's,” we shall hold ourselves excused from believing it, balancing the general character of Addison against the unsustained aspersions of an angry foe.

We do not think it necessary to dwell at length on the story said to have been told by Voltaire, of his having dined in company with Addison when in England, and left him in a state of intoxication which was painful to see. Voltaire may have said it, for he was not very choice in his asseverations ; but there is a difficulty in the way of believing it, arising from the fact, that he did not visit England till 1726, and Addison died five years before. It is clear that he was not in the company of Addison while living ; whether he has fallen in with him since, we have no means of ascertaining.

It is singular, and not very creditable to Pope, that every story which has ever been told to the disadvantage of Addison proceeds from him, and is based on his authority alone. It is from him we learn that Addison, when he was secretary to the Regency, was called upon to write notice to Hanover that the queen was dead. “ To do this,” says Johnson, “ would not have been difficult for any man but Addison, who was so overwhelmed by the greatness of the event, and so distracted by the choice of expressions, that the Lords, who could not wait for the niceties of criticism, called Mr. Southwell, clerk of the House, and ordered him to despatch the message.” Now, though Addison used Pope “ civilly ever after” their alienation, it does not seem likely that he would have gone to him with this auricular confession. Besides, it gives the impression that the queen's death took them all by storm ; yet the Lords Justices were appointed after her death by the Council, and they, at their meeting, had chosen Addison their secretary, and notified him of his election, so that he had ample time to recover from the shock of that affliction, which, as it restored the ascendancy of his own party, was not likely to break his heart. It also appears, that the Earl of Dorset was the

living letter sent over to announce the event, and to invite the Elector to the vacant throne ; so that it is not probable that Addison was ever brought to this disastrous pass. Had it been so, there is a possibility that, with his long practice in public affairs, and his eminently simple and natural style, in which he no more dealt in choice expressions than in Johnson's heavy cannonade of words, he might have found terms to communicate to the Elector the fact that the throne was vacant, which required neither flourish nor lamentation to make the news go down.

It is to the same amiable authority to which we have referred, and to no other, that we are indebted for the story, that Addison resigned his office because he was incompetent to discharge its duties. But it is ridiculous to suppose, that with his ability and experience of public affairs, he could not do what was so often and so easily done by far inferior men ; for he was no retired scholar untrained in this world's affairs, but a man whose education and habits of life were precisely adapted for the station, with the single exception of speaking in Parliament, which was not expected of him, and which he never undertook to do. The cause of his retirement is obvious enough ; it was the disease of which we have spoken ; his letters speak of long and dangerous fits of sickness, which made his friends anxious, as we learn from Vincent Bourne, who celebrated his recovery, and which may have rendered him unequal to the station, though not for the reasons which Pope's insinuation would imply. It is to be hoped, however, that they gave him credit for some honorable reason for retiring, when he died in the following year, unless, indeed, the same charity which construed severe disease into incompetency had charged his death upon him as a sin.

The subject of Addison's marriage is enveloped in a strange darkness. In this, however, his character is not concerned. Many wise men of mature age involve themselves in this kind of difficulty, from which, when they find their mistake, they cannot easily be extricated. But it is edifying to see, that our impression of the unhappiness of his marriage with the Countess of Warwick rests upon a "perhaps" of Johnson. He, in his blind reverence for rank and title, did not perceive that the high political standing of Addison, together with his literary fame, made him rather more than equal to the widow of a declining house ; for she was

not of the family which now bears the name ; and, having once taken his own view of the matter, his ponderous fancy went on in its career of invention with nothing to stop its wheels. Johnson says, he first became acquainted with the lady from having been tutor to her son. But there is no proof that he ever held this charge ; and being at the time in the office of under-secretary of state, it is not very likely that he officiated as tutor to a boy ten years old. That he did take an interest in the youth is certain from his letters, and he did so probably from regard to his mother ; but how or when he formed her acquaintance we are not informed. Johnson also quotes from Tonson, — “ He formed the design of getting that lady, from the time he was first recommended into the family.” Jacob was certainly an extraordinary person to intrust a love-tale with, and if Addison gave him his confidence on such a matter, he placed more trust in his discretion than most other men would have done.

The great critic seems to have been aware, that the world would think it well for him to give some authority besides his own imagination for stating that the marriage was unhappy ; but “ uncontradicted report ” is all the testimony he can bring. But who was to contradict it ? Addison might never have heard of it ; if he had, he does not seem very likely to have published a manifesto assuring the world that he was not the distressed object they took him for ; nor had he descendants to rise up in after days and vindicate his married fame. Johnson might have received a lesson, had he known what was said by his friends of his own fair bride, of her coarse and vulgar airs, and the selfishness with which she indulged herself at great expense in country air and other elements somewhat stronger, while he was laboring with his pen in London. Had the world known nothing more, they might reasonably have inferred that his own connection was no fountain of delight. And yet there is no doubt that he sincerely loved and deplored his wife.

There is something unpardonably rash in the manner in which he has descended on this part of Addison's history, without even Spence to sustain him. The only fact which we know in relation to it implies that the connection was happy, and not wanting in that mutual confidence which forms its greatest blessing. In Addison's will, dated a month before his death, he left his whole estate, real and

personal, to his lady ; at their marriage, instead of being enriched by the connection, he had settled property on her ; his words are, — “ I do make and ordain my dear wife executrix of this my last will ; and I do appoint her to be guardian of my dear child Charlotte Addison, until she attain the age of one-and-twenty ; being well assured that she will take good care of her education and maintenance, and provide for her in case she live to be married.” Any body who chooses may believe that such a man would intrust his only child to the care of one who had made his home so miserable that he was driven to spend his evenings in a tavern ; but with us, this undoubted expression of confidence weighs more in her favor than any amount of conjecture on the other side. For this woman, it must be remembered, had a son and daughters by her former marriage ; and a father must have been more unnatural than we think he was, if he had left his own child a helpless prisoner in a house which is said to have been intolerable to himself.

There is one passage in Addison's history on which we cannot dwell with satisfaction, though the only reproach which it brings is that of yielding for a moment to the exasperation of feeling into which the best men may sometimes fall. When he left office for ever, parties were raging high, and Steele, whose reputation and fortunes had been shattered by his follies, undertook the management of a paper which he called the *Plebeian*, in opposition to the *Peerage* bill, which was intended to abridge that power of the crown which had created twelve peers at once in Harley's administration, to secure a majority in the *House of Lords*. Some of the *Whigs* opposed the measure, and among them Steele ; who was answered in the *Old Whig*, in a paper written with such force of thought and style, that Addison was known at once to be the writer. It contained no personal allusions, and though earnest in its argument, had nothing in it meant to inflict a personal wound. Not so with Steele's reply ; it was angry and bitter, accusing the *Old Whig* of deserting his principles, and treating him in a manner which seems unaccountable to those who have never seen kind hearts possessed with the devil of party. In his retort, Addison was provoked to some personal and contemptuous expressions, such as he had never used before. The next number of the *Plebeian* showed that Steele was deeply wounded by the

treatment which he had brought upon himself ; and as Johnson says, — “ Every reader must regret that these two illustrious friends, after so many years passed in confidence and endearment, in unity of interest, conformity of opinion, and fellowship of study, should finally part in acrimonious opposition.” But so unfortunately it was ; and yet we cannot believe that Steele would have written as he did, could he have thought that his former friend would read it almost with his dying eyes. We are authorized to believe that Addison regretted his share in it, from the circumstance that Tickell did not mention this paper in his works, nor insert it among his other writings ; and that Steele’s resentment was momentary, we may infer from his afterwards mentioning Addison in a letter to Congreve as “ the man that he loved best.”

The dying scene of Addison was an appropriate close to such a life ; the support of that religion which he had followed through all his days was present to brighten the death-bed in his closing hour. Miss Aikin inclines, from internal evidence, to distrust the story told by Dr. Young, of his sending for the young Earl of Warwick, that he might see how a Christian could die. She thinks that it appears too much like display to be consistent with his humble and retiring spirit ; but it is going quite too far to discredit a circumstantial statement made on such authority, merely because it does not agree with our notions of what beseems such a place and hour. We can see no such aiming at effect, nor does it savour in the least of ostentation. The young man probably, like too many persons of his rank and age, had no faith in religious feeling ; like others, who have known nothing of it from their own experience, he did not believe in its existence, not reflecting that he could not pronounce upon the genuineness of that which he did not know. To us, it seems perfectly natural that Addison, earnest to undeceive him, should have taken that course to show him that religion was not a name and a profession, but a real and substantial thing, which, though unseen, has power to sustain the dying when the shadows of death are falling and the world is passing away.

Before his death, he sent for Gay, with whom he had not been familiar, and, after receiving him with great kindness, asked his forgiveness of some former wrong ; he did not say what it was, and Gay never was able to conjecture what it

could possibly have been. But the incident is important ; for, certainly, if the dying man was so anxious to make reparation for an injury which the subject of it was never conscious of receiving, he must, beyond all question, have taken the same opportunity to clear his mind from the shade of those greater offences with which he has been charged, if there were any such to remember. Were there nothing else, this would be sufficient to prove to our satisfaction, that he had never been guilty of that fraud, falsehood, and intemperance, of which an enemy accused him, and which have left a reproach upon his memory that it is high time to remove, wherever the condemnation may fall.

It is a matter of deep interest to the cause of letters to clear from unmerited reproach one of the few, who, with high literary eminence, have labored to maintain not so much the reputation as the character of a Christian. It is the glory of Addison, that in an age when lawless ridicule was sometimes applied to subjects the most important, and when religion was neither valued nor understood by many of the leaders of taste, when Sir William Temple had reason to say, “The fools of David's time, who said in their hearts, There is no God, are the wits of ours,” he never was ashamed of the gospel, but quietly opened his heart to its influences, and endeavoured to keep its commands. He was also free from that narrowness with which religious principle is sometimes attended. Sometimes he speaks with severity of those who differed from him ; for the virtue of toleration had then hardly dawned upon the public mind ; but that he was free from all bigotry is manifest from his patronage of Whiston, and his respect for Thomas Burnet, and the “reasoning mill,” as Voltaire called him, Dr. Samuel Clarke. Without any compromise of his faith or feeling, he associated with such men as Garth, who, when dying, sent to him to ask if Christianity was true ; and under all circumstances and in all associations, he kept the whiteness of his soul undefiled, except by the stains and shadows thrown upon it by the wretched hostility of Pope. How this was requited we happily are able to tell. After their separation, brought on by the insolent letter mentioned above, having occasion to speak of the manner in which the language was enriched by translations of classical authors, Addison, in the *Freeholder*, mentions Pope's Homer, not cordially, as if it was meant

for a peace-offering, but in terms of respect perfectly natural, kind, and such as, though they would not equal the demands of the poet, all disinterested persons would allow to be just.

But we do not mean to represent Addison as faultless ; neither was Pope destitute of virtues, though afflicted with that disease of the spirit which made him see all things yellow. To us it seems clear, that the great failing in Addison's character was his fastidiousness ; excellent as his heart was, this difficulty prevented his sympathies from extending as widely as religion would have them. It made him shrink from near approach to mankind in general, though warm-hearted to his friends and companions ; and thus it often happens, that literary habits and a sensitive nature, though they have their own ways of manifestation, do something to unfit men for active usefulness ; as the marble, though excellent for sculpture, is less adapted for works of public improvement than coarser varieties of stone. But after making all possible abatement, enough will remain to establish the character of Addison on the highest ground. As a writer, we look through the history of letters, and we find very few before him ; as a man and a Christian, we know of none.

If we have exceeded our usual bounds in enlarging on this subject, it is because we are fully persuaded that justice has never been done to Addison. Those who look into the matter are surprised to see how little foundation there is for many things which go down from generation to generation ; it is sometimes alarming to think how long the effect of a calumny may last. But it is consoling to see, that, where the life has been ordered in principle and faithfulness, the general character bears witness for itself which none can deny. The world may charge the man with weaknesses and frailties, but they cannot misrepresent him so far as to over-cloud the brightness of his fame. So it has been with Addison ; those who credited the slander have not denied his excellence ; they have tenderly lamented these darkening stains, as those infirmities which may be expected from poor human nature. But in truth, he needs no such forgiveness, and we believe that those who investigate the matter without having made up their minds beforehand will bring in a verdict of "not guilty," and be ready to exalt him to one of the highest places among the lights of the world.